

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 619

UD 024 185

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TITLE Minnesota K-12 Education: The Current Debate, the Present Condition. A Report of the CURA/College of Education Project on the Future of K-12 Public Education in Minnesota.
INSTITUTION Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.
REPORT NO CURA-85-3
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 170p.; For a related document, see UD 024 193.
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Change; Educational Finance; *Educational History; Educational Policy; *Educational Practices; *Educational Quality; *Elementary Secondary Education; *Public Education; Student Attitudes; Student Characteristics; Student Needs; Teacher Attitudes

IDENTIFIERS *Minnesota

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to provide an accurate picture of the nature and condition of Minnesota's K-12 public education system and the challenges it faces in the coming years. Section I describes the major concerns about Minnesota education (centering on excellence and student performance, system accountability and responsiveness, and efficient and cost-effective school service), and reviews the major reform proposals. Section II provides an historical overview, from 1847 to the present. Section III discusses why the public school system contracted during the 1970s and 1980s and, at the same time, took on additional responsibilities. Section IV considers the impact on the schools of a changed student population (focusing on changes in family life, alcohol and drug use, sexual activity, reading habits, employment, and student attitudes and behavior), teacher dissatisfaction, continuing financial disparities, use of the new technology and adoption of school effectiveness research, and changes in the political climate. Section V presents a policy framework which attempts to describe key elements of the structure of Minnesota public education. Finally, Section VI summarizes major findings and conclusions. Appendices include a chronology of K-12 education in Minnesota; a table comparing the average school staff salaries in 1973-74, 1978-79, and 1982-83; and highlights of a survey of the educational attitudes of Minnesota high school students in the early 1980s. (KH)

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THE CURRENT DEBATE,
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THE FUTURE OF K-12
PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

A project sponsored by Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the
College of Education University of Minnesota

**MINNESOTA K-12 EDUCATION:
THE CURRENT DEBATE,
THE PRESENT CONDITION**

by

Thomas R. Peek, Edward L. Duren Jr., and Lawrence C. Wells

**A Report of the CURA/College of Education Project on
The Future of K-12 Public Education in Minnesota**

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A publication of the Center for
Urban and Regional Affairs,
University of Minnesota, 1927 S.
Fifth St., Minneapolis, Minnesota
55454.

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1985

Publication No. CURA 85-3

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PREFACE

This report grows out of the Project on the Future of K-12 Public Education in Minnesota sponsored jointly by CURA and the College of Education at the University of Minnesota. The project, begun in the summer of 1983, has been designed to develop an accurate and comprehensive assessment of K-12 public education in Minnesota, to examine the debate surrounding public education, especially its applicability to Minnesota, and to analyze the various reform proposals as they might apply to Minnesota.

The central component of the project is the University of Minnesota Panel on the Future of Public Education in Minnesota, comprised of faculty members from various disciplines throughout the University with expertise and interest in public education. This faculty panel has guided the development of the project and reviewed its reports and publications. We serve as the co-chairs of that panel.

The text of this report was prepared by staff members Thomas Peek, Edward Duren, and Lawrence Wells. As each section was drafted it was distributed to panel members for review. The report was reviewed in its entirety at a meeting of the panel and the final revised version was again distributed for review and comment.

This report describes the Minnesota debate on K-12 public education and examines some aspects of the current condition of the state's educational system. The history of educational change is reviewed, recent trends affecting the schools are described, and several challenges facing the system are identified. While the report does not assess specific education legislation considered during the 1985 session, it does contain analysis important to the ongoing discussion of school reform in Minnesota.

This report is the third of several growing out of the joint CURA/College of Education project. Two earlier reports were published by CURA, The Berman, Weiler Study of Minnesota Student Performance: A Critical Review (September 1984) and Minnesota Citizen Attitudes Towards Public Education (March 1985). The CURA/College of Education project is an ongoing effort which will continue to use the faculty panel as the project develops a more comprehensive picture of public education and its possible directions in the future.

Several members of the panel were particularly helpful in assisting the staff including:

- Shirley Clark, Tim Mazzoni, Van Mueller and Chuck Sederberg of the College of Education.
- Ted Kolderie* and Arthur Naftalin of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

- Diane Hedin, of the Center for Youth Development and Research.
- Thomas Anding and Esther Wattenberg of CURA.

In addition to the faculty panel, many people have made special efforts to contribute ideas or advice during the preparation of this report. They include:

- William Craig, who provided various kinds of analytical support and reviewed the first draft of the report.
- Joyce Krupey, Minnesota Senate Counsel and Research, who reviewed the financial analysis of the report and provided other information to the staff.
- David Rodbourne, Spring Hill Center, who reviewed the first draft of the report.
- Various other people who, through conversation or correspondence, provided valuable information and ideas:
 - John Brandl, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.
 - Lee Munnich Jr., Minnesota Department of Energy, Planning and Development, formerly with the Minnesota Business Partnership.
 - Joe Nathan, author of Free to Teach.
 - Sharon Peck, Minnesota Department of Education.
 - Jerry Stein, Spring Hill Center.
 - Joel Sutter, Minnesota Senate Counsel and Research.
 - Various staff members of the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Peggy Wolfe and Sherry Bengston who maintained the CURA collection of reports and other materials used by the project and assisted in their acquisition, as well as helped prepare the bibliography of the report.
- Judith Weir, editor of the report.
- Chris McKee, who word processed hundreds of pages of draft material and word processed the final draft for publication.
- Jacalyn Plagge, who assisted in the preparation of the bibliography and references.
- Phil Lundberg, whose art work appears on the cover.
- Craig Skone, who prepared the figures contained in the report.

- CURA support staff, whose quality work and efficiency was of great assistance to the project.
- Many others, too numerous to list, who assisted the project in a variety of ways.

This report was prepared with the active participation of the faculty panel and reflects its deliberation and review.

The report does not necessarily, in whole or in part, reflect the views or perspectives of each of those mentioned here whose help and assistance are so greatly appreciated.

William Gardner

Thomas M. Scott

Co-chairs, Panel on the Future of K-12
Public Education in Minnesota

*Ted Kolderie believes the study is fundamentally defective in not having interviewed and questioned systematically various proponents of school system change, and in failing to give comparable critical attention to the proposals and positions of the major groups in the educational system and believes the conclusions of the study's authors are, therefore, not supportable.

INTRODUCTION: ASSESSING MINNESOTA K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION AMIDST CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE SYSTEM

Minnesota has been drawn into the debate about the quality of public education sweeping the country since the new decade began. One national report after another has been issued and numerous reforms proposed in response to an educational system said to be placing the nation "at risk." As an outgrowth of this, Minnesota counterparts of the national reform debate have assembled commissions and task forces, initiated reform proposals, and lobbied state and local officials for change. By 1984 the quality of public schools in Minnesota had become a major political issue drawing the attention of the state's news media, public affairs community, educational establishment, and the Minnesota legislature. While the Minnesota debate largely mirrors the national politics of education, it has some home-grown elements reflecting a community of people with long-standing interest and concern about improving the state's public education system. The ferment about public education--in Minnesota and nationally--focuses on a wide variety of concerns and reform proposals. These reflect a number of perspectives about the purposes of public education, the best strategies for achieving those goals, and the current condition of the schools.

The purpose of this report is to construct an accurate picture of the nature and condition of the state's K-12 public education system as can best be determined from available Minnesota data. The report begins by summarizing the concerns and proposals that comprise the Minnesota debate on public education. It then outlines change in the Minnesota education system throughout the state's history, examines recent trends affecting the schools, and identifies new challenges facing the system. The report contains a policy framework identifying the basic elements of the system and the various processes governing its operation. Finally, the current Minnesota education debate is evaluated in relationship to the picture of Minnesota public education that emerges from this research effort.

A major task of this project was to locate and synthesize Minnesota data (and pertinent national data) that would aid in constructing an accurate picture of public education in Minnesota. An effort was made to use the most reliable and most recent data available at the time of writing. Most useful for this kind of integrated policy report were data already compiled and analyzed, in some cases providing comparisons with other states and with the nation as a whole. However, much of the analysis also involved the integration and synthesis of data drawn from many disparate sources.

There is both a strength and a weakness to this kind of study, heavily reliant as it is on existing data and research. The strength is that the analysis, findings, and conclusions are firmly supported by data, usually Minnesota data. The weakness is that some important aspects of Minnesota public education are given little attention because little or no data, particularly Minnesota data, were available. Thus, while some questions remain unanswered, the analysis that appears here is a direct reflection of the Minnesota data base.

The findings and conclusion drawn from the study are intended to clarify aspects of the system now being discussed by policy makers, the public affairs and education communities, and the Minnesota citizenry. It is hoped that this report, with its strong link to existing information about the system, will contribute to the critically important debate now underway by providing a clearer understanding of Minnesota public education and the challenges it faces in the coming years.

I. THE CURRENT FERMENT

Many concerns have been raised about the quality of public education in Minnesota. Several observations can be made about these concerns:

- The central concerns of the current ferment, reflected in various proposals, are academic "excellence" and student performance, system accountability and responsiveness, and efficient and cost-effective school services.
- These concerns and proposals largely reflect a vast national literature and to a lesser degree Minnesota research, analysis, and advocacy.
- These concerns and proposals reflect a variety of presumptions about what is most important among the goals of public education.
- In some cases the priority of goals represented by the concerns and proposals are in conflict with each other or reflect long-standing dilemmas about the best way to provide public education in view of its multiple purposes.
- Some concerns which in previous times were key elements of education reform movements are given little emphasis in the current Minnesota debate and are not prominent among the proposals. Notable among these omitted concerns are improving access to education for special populations, minimizing fiscal and programmatic disparities among school districts, and expanding the financial resources of the schools.

THE MAJOR CONCERNS

The major concerns of the current debate are summarized here.

Why Are Students' Standardized Test Scores Declining?

Virtually all of the recent national reports mention the decline in SAT, ACT, and PSAT test scores during the past decade. While the emphasis given to the test scores as measures of student performance varies among the reports, there is widespread concern--based largely on the scores--that the schools may not be providing children with adequate scholastic skills.

Is There Sufficient Emphasis on "Basic" Academic Areas?

Many argue that "basic" academic areas have been neglected in the schools because of an overemphasis on "soft," "non-essential" curriculum or a lack of stringent standards

of performance and adequate requirements, particularly in the areas of math, English, and science.

Are Children Developing the Skills Required for the Future Economy and Society?

It has been argued that people will increasingly need higher level skills to provide the entrepreneurial leadership and high-tech expertise needed for the decentralized, technological society ahead rather than the conformity and basic knowledge needed to perform the routinized tasks of the outgoing industrial society. Two educational concerns flow from this argument which have been raised in the national and state reports. First, some suggest that the "basics" of the twenty-first century must include not only reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also communication and scientific and technological literacy. Others suggest that current pedagogy places little emphasis on the development of "higher level thinking skills," through discussion, writing, problem-solving, and analysis.

Are the Schools Adequately Preparing Students for College?

Those who question the adequacy of schools' preparation of children for college often mention the declining performance on standardized tests. But they also express concerns about current college admission standards, insufficient higher level skills development, and inadequate basic skills training. These concerns are prevalent in the national reports and are part of the state discussion as well.

Are Teachers and the Teaching Profession What They Ought To Be?

Within the national studies a wide range of issues relating to the teaching profession is raised. Questions are asked about:

- the quality of people entering the teaching profession;
- teacher training programs;
- pedagogies employed by teachers;
- incentives for teachers to enter and stay in the profession, including salary increases, "merit pay," and expanded career opportunities;
- in-service training for teachers in the system;
- seniority and tenure as factors in the ability of schools to innovate;
- use of non-certified teaching personnel; and
- teacher "burnout."

**Is the Institutional and Social Environment of the School
Conducive to Learning or Does it Inhibit the Development
of Self-Esteem and the Creative Abilities of Children?**

Perhaps corresponding with the growth of large inner city and suburban schools, there has been increasing concern about the school environment. Some have suggested that the institutional and social environment, particularly in large high schools, does not lend itself to the development of self-esteem and creativity in children. This was a significant element in previous education reform periods, enunciated by authors like Ivan Illich and Paul Goodman. Bureaucracy, large classes, discipline problems, drug and alcohol use, and rigid curriculum and pedagogy have all been cited as factors making the educational environment less constructive than it ought to be.

**Would the Quality of Education Improve if the System was
Restructured to Provide Greater Accountability of Teachers,
Administrators, and School Boards to Parents and Citizens?**

If there is any homegrown element to the current discussion of educational reform in Minnesota, it is the concern that major restructuring of the education system is necessary to improve its accountability and responsiveness to demands for innovation. It is suggested that changing current institutional arrangements affecting the education decision-making process will stimulate innovation and change.

Two basic types of restructuring ideas have gained prominence in the Minnesota discussion. One, school-based management, calls for a decentralization of decision-making authority within local school districts, shifting some of that authority from the superintendent and school board to the principals and teachers of individual school buildings and the communities in which they are located. The hope is that such a change would stimulate innovation at the building level and make school programs more reflective of local community needs and desires.

A second major restructuring proposal would make use of vouchers to increase parents' choice in selecting schools. Several types of education voucher systems have been proposed and legislation reflecting some of these has been introduced in the Minnesota Legislature.

A hybrid of these two proposals has been proposed by the Minnesota Business Partnership as part of its "Minnesota Plan" for structural reform of the schools in an effort to decentralize decision-making to the school level while providing parent and student choice in grades seven through twelve. A modification of this proposal has been suggested by the Governor.

Should Public Schools Broaden Their Involvement² with the Community, Particularly with Business?

Some have argued that schools should broaden their involvement with the communities in which they operate by expanding the range of services they provide and seeking the participation of groups and individuals beyond the traditional education community. Among the activities discussed are:

- use of shared facilities for various community services, using buildings that have been closed because of declining enrollment or retrenchment;
- expanded involvement of students in community activities as part of their schooling, not only to enhance their educational experience, but to engender closer ties between the community and the schools; and
- use of parent volunteers for special projects in the schools.

Much of the concern about expanding the community role of schools looks to enhancing the relationship between schools and business. Among the types of school/business involvements often discussed are the following:

- sharing of school facilities with local businesses;
- involving business in determining the kind of training needed to prepare students for the world of work;
- using businesspeople as employees or volunteers in the schools for special courses or other activities;
- obtaining business expertise to improve the efficiency of school management by applying business practices to the schools;
- obtaining private sector funding for special educational programs of interest to the business community;
- working with people in business to establish non-profit foundations for raising money for special educational programs; and
- working closely with the business community to improve public support of the schools.

Is the Educational System Providing Equal Educational Opportunity for all Children?

From the mid-1950s through the 1970s equity concerns drove much of the effort to reform public education. Programs were established, particularly by the federal

government, to provide equal access to education regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, or physical or mental handicap. State finance systems were retooled to diminish disparities in the expenditures and programs of local schools caused by variations in local property wealth.

While equity (especially with respect to equal access) is recognized by most of the national reports and is sometimes mentioned in the Minnesota discussion, it is thus far not as central a concern as it once was. Some analysis of Minnesota's school finance system has been done, by CURA and others, which indicates an erosion of the state's commitment to eliminating disparities and funding education with progressive taxes based on "ability to pay." But as yet there has been little public discussion of these changes and how they affect equality of educational opportunity.

Are the Public Schools Undermining Traditional American Values?

There is a very conservative critique of public education which finds adherents at the national, state, and local level. They argue that the schools promote values that contradict the traditional mores of American society as well as local community standards. They say that within its permissive social environment the schools teach "secular humanism" in contradiction to Christian values. They are concerned about sex education, "values clarification" courses, drug abuse programs, and the teaching of scientific theories of evolution.

Are the Schools Cost-Effective?

Much of the discussion about public education is driven by a concern about the amount of money being spent on public schools, the single largest expenditure in the state budget and a major contributor to local property taxes. In Minnesota, this concern has been raised by those who believe the current system is not cost-effective and requires restructuring. Beyond these specific criticisms is the presence of a general political climate in Minnesota which reflects concern about high state and local taxes and their effects on the state's "business climate."

THE MAJOR MINNESOTA PROPOSALS

Over one-hundred different reform proposals from more than a dozen different groups and organizations were reviewed for this report. Highlights from some of them are presented here. (A more detailed review of these proposals will be made available in a forthcoming CURA/College of Education publication.)

Reaffirm and Expand the Basic Curriculum

The area of curriculum includes two major concerns: specific curricular recommendations and state tests. There appears to be little dispute over what should constitute the core curriculum. The Governor's Commission on Education for Economic Growth (1984) and the Minnesota Business Partnership (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984g) emphasize math, science, language arts (communication), and social studies. The Minnesota Alliance for Science (1984) stresses the importance of math and science beyond the level of minimum requirements. The Minnesota Business Partnership goes further and wants to deregulate state mandated course requirements at the secondary level while guaranteeing free electives for secondary students to be taken in their school or elsewhere. Minnesota Wellspring (1985), while recommending that core subjects be required for all students in high school, also wants to give local school districts a choice in which requirements are emphasized. The Governor's Commission, on the other hand, recommends focused and specific requirements at both the elementary and secondary levels. The Minnesota Education Association (1984) states that preschool education should be available to all who want it and community education should be delivered as part of the public school system. Finally, the Governor's Commission and a DFL group (Senator Pehler et al. 1985) want to increase funding for educating the gifted and talented.

Test Students

There is also general agreement, although not unanimity, on the subject of testing. State standardized tests measuring mastery in core areas are favored by several groups or individuals (Governor's Commission, Minnesota Business Partnership, Governor Perpich (1985), and the DFL group). However, the Minnesota Education Association does not favor such a state standardized test but instead asks for locally constructed testing programs for diagnostic use and curriculum improvement. The DFL group's plan permits local districts to add to the state test in order to evaluate local curriculum.

The test results would be used in different ways. For example, to provide a statewide data base and to see how students, schools, districts, and the state measure against others (Governor's Commission); to publish the aggregated test scores by school (Governor Perpich and the Minnesota Business Partnership); and to measure the strength of a district's programs by aggregated results (the DFL group). The Governor's Commission also wants to institute a statewide graduation qualifying test.

Modify Pedagogy

Pedagogy refers to how the curriculum is taught, including teaching methods, use of time and space, and the application of technology. The reform proposals reflect three areas of interest.

The first and most prominent area is creating a learner outcome and mastery-based model for education in which specific knowledge and skills are delineated that students are expected to attain (learner outcome) and students are then assessed in their progress toward attaining these goals (mastery). Both the Minnesota Business Partnership and the governor's Policy Development Program (Minnesota Executive Branch Policy Development Program 1984c) discuss this issue, with the Business Partnership also calling for all schools to maintain an "individual learning plan" for each student.

The second area is using new technology in the schools. The Public School Incentives plan (1983) mentions examples of using new technology while the Minnesota Education Association emphasizes technology as a teaching tool but not as a replacement for teachers and teaching. Minnesota Wellspring advocates establishing regional technology centers.

Finally, some mention is made of specific ways to assist in classroom teaching. As part of its plan to update the science and mathematics curriculum, the Minnesota Alliance for Science urges that teacher preparation be modified for elementary teachers so that they will be comfortable and proficient in teaching the new curriculum. It also suggests that supplementary learning materials be obtained and teachers instructed in their use at the secondary level. For its part, the Minnesota Education Association sets some limits on class size for optimal learning activity in preschool, elementary, and secondary classrooms.

Upgrade the Teaching Profession

Proposals regarding teaching staff move along four general lines.

Salary increases are advocated by the Governor's Commission and the Minnesota Business Partnership. Although no dollar amount is mentioned, the Governor's Commission wants the increases to reflect income levels of other jobs requiring similar training and responsibility, while the Business Partnership advocates cost-of-living increases plus additional increases for the added responsibilities which they propose. Although the issue of salary is not discussed in the Minnesota Education Association's 1984 report, the MEA has subsequently asked for a 50 percent increase in the starting salary for teachers. It is the only group to specifically mention dollar figures.

Expanding career options is a topic much discussed. Both the Governor's Commission and DFL group discuss differentiated career paths or career ladder programs. Related to this is the MEA's proposal for extended teaching contracts to include areas of curriculum writing, summer school teaching, and staff development. Of a more unconventional nature are Public School Incentives proposals for teachers to form legal partnerships to provide educational services and for teachers to be allowed to assume additional responsibilities within the school system or with an outside organization or business while retaining ties to the classroom. The Minnesota Business Partnership recommends establishing a state fund to defray interest charges on commercial loans for teachers who want to start their own business to provide educational services.

Teaching staff structure is addressed by the Minnesota Business Partnership as it encourages all schools to organize their faculty into teacher teams made up from those in three new categories of teachers--lead teacher, teaching assistant or aide, and adjunct teacher. These teams would better coordinate curriculum and deepen the contact between teachers and student. An additional structural change recommended by the Minnesota Business Partnership is the modification of teacher seniority laws to permit districts to take into account program needs in laying off or rehiring teachers.

Many recommendations for staff development appear in the proposals. The Minnesota Education Association proposes inservice courses, a mentorship program for probationary teachers, and a program of collegial coaching in which nonprobationary teachers observe peers for the purpose of professional consultation (but not for the purpose of evaluation). Governor Perpich suggests increased state funds to local districts for staff and program development. In a similar manner, the DFL group proposes a staff development grant for all school districts.

In conclusion, noteworthy by its absence is any mention by any Minnesota organization of the "merit pay" issue that has so captivated the national discussion and been implemented by several states.

Reform Administrative and Support Staff

In contrast with the volume of proposals dealing with teaching staff and institutional arrangements, materials on administrative and support staff are miniscule.

Several proposals try to assure that school district and administrative personnel are adaptable to change. Likely to be controversial, is the Minnesota Business Partnership's proposal to remove tenure from administrative positions in order to give districts more flexibility in assigning personnel. The governor's Policy Development Program advocates training administrators in the process and procedures of planning for change, and the DFL

group proposes a regionally-based program to provide assistance to school district management in the use of technology. The Governor's Commission recommends additional training opportunities for administrators on the proper discharge of teaching staff.

Beyond these proposals the Minnesota Education Association has several things to say about the process of teacher evaluations and about the use of school support personnel. They suggest, for example, that all non-instructional duties should be performed by persons other than the teacher.

Restructure Institutional Arrangements

The issue of institutional arrangements, or structural reform is, perhaps, the most visible focus of reform recommendations. Two basic types of restructuring are proposed: school-based (or school site) management and parental and student choice (often referred to as "voucher" proposals).

School-based management may be defined as the process of returning the responsibility for decisions about curriculum, instruction, budget, and personnel to the individual school. It is part of an effort to decentralize the decision-making process and empower those at the local level who are directly affected by the decisions. The Minnesota Business Partnership, the Citizens League (1982), and Public School Incentives all have proposals recommending school-based management.

The call for school-based management grows out of "school effectiveness" research. The Minnesota Department of Education (1984b) discusses the characteristics of effective schools and includes school-based management as an important element for school effectiveness.

Undoubtedly, the most controversial school reform proposals are those allowing students (or their parents) to choose the school they wish to attend and take state aid with them to the school of their choice. These "voucher system" proposals fall into two groups: those that allow choices only among competing public schools and those that expand the choice to private schools, and in some instances private business and community providers, as well.

Into the first group fall the proposals of Governor Perpich and the DFL group. Perpich recommends that beginning in the 1986-87 school year, students in the eleventh and twelfth grades be allowed to choose which public education program best serves their needs and interests, and by the 1988-89 school year, that all families be able to select the public school their children wish to attend. The DFL group, on the other hand, does not go as far as the governor's proposal. They recommend establishing a "structural partnership

task force" to recommend curricular alternatives to regular programs for eleventh and twelfth grade students.

Voucher plans that go beyond the public school arena include the Citizens League, the Minnesota Business Partnership, and two legislative proposals. The earliest (and still perhaps the most influential) proposal came from the Citizens League in 1982. They recommend that public education dollars follow parents' choices about which schools (public or private) or educational services should be used. Mention should also be made of the work and influence of St. Paul author and school-reformer Joe Nathan, whose 1983 book Free to Teach outlines a program of parental and student choice. Nathan is working with Public School Incentives to try and achieve school reform in Minnesota.

A bill authored by Representative John Brandl (1983a) seeks to establish a program for lower income pupils to select the school they want to attend from among public and non-public schools participating in the program. And a bill from Senator Florian Chmielewski (1983) proposes creating a demonstration grant program for elementary students who would be allowed a designated amount of money to be spent at a participating public or non-public school within a particular district. How education services change under such a system might then be demonstrated.

Finally, the Minnesota Business Partnership, in their much-publicized recommendation to realign Minnesota's elementary and secondary schools, proposes that eleventh and twelfth grade students be eligible to receive a stipend for two years of state subsidized education from an accredited public or private provider.

Establish Public-Private Partnerships

Partnership arrangements generally refer to alliances between public schools and private businesses, in which business offers its resources and expertise to the school, and benefits by its ability to influence the kind of knowledge and skills potential employees bring to the workplace.

The DFL group proposes two partnership arrangements: businesses are urged to provide release time for employees serving on school boards and district advisory committees, and a "business incentive matching program," is suggested that would encourage business participation in education. The Governor's Commission has several proposals that would foster business/education partnerships, Minnesota Wellspring encourages more partnership arrangements, and the Minnesota Alliance for Science wants to design an "exchange network" to match teachers who need resources with individuals and groups who want to provide them. The Education Council of the Greater Minneapolis

Chamber of Commerce has commissioned a report (Hill and Knowlton 1984) concerned solely with business/education partnerships as a way of improving public education.

Enhance Teacher Recruitment

Teacher recruitment is addressed in a number of reform proposals. The Alliance for Science and the Minnesota Business Partnership, among others, specifically discuss preparing for teacher shortages in critical areas. To bring in new teachers, it is suggested that alternative paths into teaching be created. The DFL group, for instance, proposes allowing "community experts" to teach on a limited basis. Other proposals are made by Public School Incentives, the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (1985), the Governor's Commission, and the Minnesota High Technology Council (1985).

Another approach is to make teaching more attractive through better working conditions, and increased rewards (including higher pay). The Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and the Minnesota High Technology Council make proposals along this line.

A third way of recruiting is to give financial help to would-be teachers. The Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1984) wants to support talented students with scholarships and with specific funds dedicated to helping minority students prepare for teaching. Loan forgiveness is suggested by the same group and supported, as well, by Minnesota Wellspring and the Minnesota High Technology Council. Loan forgiveness could be used, in their view, as a way of encouraging people to train for areas in which there are teacher shortages, such as math and science teachers for jobs in outstate Minnesota.

Reform Teacher Preparation

Reforms for teacher preparation range from improved screening of students before they enter training programs to become teachers (the Minnesota Education Association, the Minnesota High Technology Council, and the HECB) to monitoring performance quality while in training (the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) to testing successful completion of training (the Governor's Commission and the DFL group). The Minnesota High Technology Council proposes creating a new short-term certification program to bring math and science people into teaching.

Continuing education for teachers is called for in a number of proposals from the HECB. This includes a proposal in which master teachers would help beginning teachers develop their skills, and a proposal for evaluating teacher training institutions and programs.

Modify Teacher Licensure

What about the process of licensing teachers? The DFL group proposes that the current rules on certification and licensure renewal be reviewed. The Governor's Commission wants the rules upgraded and the Minnesota Business Partnership wants to revise the process of teacher licensing. The HECB recommends developing criteria and methods for evaluating already licensed teachers so that standards will be set for continuing licensure. The HECB also proposes that teachers with continuing licenses develop personal professional development plans that they would be expected to follow.

Conduct Specific Research and Development Projects

Various research and development programs have been proposed to go along with the reform movement. Developing model schools is suggested by Public School Incentives. Regional magnet schools of excellence and a state school for the arts have been proposed. Part of the Minnesota Business Partnership's plan is a research, development, and training network to test the implementation of the new educational system in demonstration sites. The DFL group proposes legislative appropriations to fund the research and development projects identified by a statewide task force. Research on improving teacher education is specified by the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

The Minnesota Council on Quality Education (1985) recommends, among other things, developing alternative educational structures and practices that will increase student communication skills and teach higher level thinking, decision-making, and leadership. The council suggests restructuring the traditional school calendar to improve teaching effectiveness and it proposes research into the special needs of underserved students to eliminate achievement gaps.

Alter Financial Arrangements

Although nearly all of the reform proposals involve financial arrangements of one sort or another, there are a few specific proposals in which funding is paramount.

The most controversial proposal is Governor Perpich's plan to realign the state-local fiscal system. The Governor wants state government to assume responsibility for the 23.5 mill local school levy (basic foundation aid program), offsetting the impact of this on the state budget by transferring responsibility for property tax relief programs to local governments. This amounts to a tradeoff of about \$725 million, but there would be no net change in either the state or local funding shares for schools. In effect, the governor's proposal is a clarification and simplification of state-local relationships, but not a major change in financial responsibility.

In addition to this proposal, the governor's Policy Development Program has requested additional funding for the Council on Quality Education's study of alternative educational practices and, in separate proposals, requests funding for "low cost strategies" (such as improving teacher training) and "higher cost strategies" (such as raising teacher salaries).

Finally, the Minnesota Business Partnership wants to create an educational investment fund to defray the cost of the transition to their proposed restructured school system.

THE ONGOING DEBATE

Current discussion of public education in Minnesota is influenced by research projects and public commissions examining various aspects of public education, individuals and groups advocating particular reform strategies, and organizations seeking to maintain or enhance their particular interests in education.

Beyond this activity, several efforts are underway to stimulate public discussion and solicit public opinion regarding the issue. Commissioner Ruth Randall initiated "Minnesota--A Dialogue of Education" which has completed several hundred locally-sponsored meetings where citizen opinion about Minnesota public education has been aired. The findings of this dialogue will be summarized in a report scheduled for completion in April 1985. The Legislative Commission on Public Education gathered seventy-five people involved in public education for a day in September 1983 to discuss the mission and quality of public education in Minnesota. Following that session the commission held public meetings in seventeen locations throughout the state to discuss the mission and role of education in Minnesota and has since held numerous legislative hearings on various aspects of Minnesota public education.

In addition to these state government efforts, Spring Hill Center's education project has been convening a series of conferences and other meetings to stimulate discussion and engender consensus among members of the Minnesota education community on several aspects of public education. Numerous other forums, conferences and seminars have been held during the past several years to focus public attention on this important public policy area.

II. MINNESOTA'S ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before addressing the issues raised in Chapter I, a review of the history of Minnesota's public school system will provide a useful context. The current system of public education in Minnesota has evolved over the last 136 years (1849-1985). This evolution has been influenced by a cultural, economic, and political environment unique to Minnesota. The attitudes and orientation of citizens in the state have influenced the development of public elementary and secondary schools. Even so, the development of education in Minnesota parallels the development of education across the country. Minnesota's system developed somewhat later than the school systems of the East Coast communities, but like most public systems in the United States, it developed in relation to the degree of industrialization, the population density, and level of prosperity within the community.

This chapter will discuss how Minnesotans established a K-12 system and how key aspects of that system have changed over the years. Significant trends in Minnesota reform history will be identified, particularly with an eye towards their implication for the reform proposals of today. Finally, some of the developments and changes associated with these reform movements will be summarized. For readers preferring to look through a list of events in the development of Minnesota's elementary and secondary schools, Appendix A presents such a chronology.

ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN MINNESOTA 1847-1900

During the period when Minnesota established its public schools, the population was growing tremendously. At the beginning of the territorial period (1847), Minnesota's population was estimated at 4,000. On the threshold of statehood (1857), Minnesota's population had grown to over 150,000. Many in the population were foreign born and many lived in essentially transplanted foreign communities (mostly German in these early years). Not represented in the population figures was a substantial American Indian population.

The basic elements of the Minnesota public education system developed during a time when people were also attempting to define what it meant to be an American, during times when ethnic pride (especially in Minnesota's largest ethnic group, the Germans) was very high. Religious intolerance was at a similarly high level.

Minnesota's educational system developed during a time of tremendous economic growth. From the beginning, Minnesotans thrived within a diverse economy. Those in the business community recognized early the importance of education as a way of preparing people for work.

In the period from 1847 to 1900 the **basic elements** of Minnesota's public education system were put in place so that by the turn of the century most of the elements of our present system were evident. What remained was the establishment of the State Department of Education, accomplished by the end of the second decade of the 20th century. The history of these formative years is reviewed here.

The Legal Foundations

The legal foundations for establishing public education in Minnesota began with federal legislation passed long before Minnesota's territorial period. Although the constitution is mute on the issue of education, Congress very early indicated a role for the federal government in public education. The first indication of this was in the first Northwest Ordinance of 1784, which stated that section 16 in every township was to be set aside for the support of education. The second Northwest Ordinance of 1787, in addition to setting aside land for educational use, affirms in Article III that, "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" (Minnesota Department of Education 1982c, XXXV).

Section 18 of the Act Establishing the Territorial Government of Minnesota (March 3, 1849) set aside the 16th and 36th sections of each township for the use of schools. Minnesota's designation of double the usual number of sections, according to Folwell (1969b, 244), was due to the work of Henry H. Sibley and the belief by many United States congressmen that "on account of the desert soil and the hyperborean climate of the region, the lands of Minnesota would have but little value."

The language in the Territorial Act was carried forward in the Act Authorizing a State Government (February 26, 1857) and finally in the state's constitution in 1857. Articles XI and XIII, also referred specifically to public schools:

The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it shall be the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools...(to make provision by taxation and otherwise) as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools in each township in the state.

(Minnesota Department of Education,
1982c, LXII)

With these words Minnesotans affirmed their intent to create a public system of education.

Developing Key Elements of the System

It was clear from the outset that the main promoters of a public educational system (the University of Minnesota, the state superintendent of public instruction, teachers, and the governor) intended the system to be centrally controlled. Every superintendent of public instruction from 1848 to 1919, with the support of the governor, pushed for a more centralized system, based on effectiveness and efficiency, supported through universal taxation, requiring uniform compulsory attendance, and available free to every citizen of the state. Such precedents had been established in most of the heavily populated, urbanized, and industrialized communities of the United States.

There were, however, some disagreements as each of the elements of the public educational system were put in place from 1847 to 1900: the development of state supervision, the creation of the "common school," determination of local school organization and management, establishment of the University of Minnesota, initiation of universal taxation and compulsory attendance, and the establishment of normal schools and high schools.

Minnesota's first territorial legislature was committed to the concepts of the "common school," a uniform experience for all students in the system, universal taxation, and a fledgling notion of teacher preparation. Other concepts--universal attendance, certain other aspects of creating a uniform educational experience, and nonsectarianism--developed more slowly and were not resolved until later in this period. The structures needed to institutionalize all these concepts often proved difficult to operationalize.

Common Schools

The legislature in 1849 authorized "common schools." According to Folwell:

The bill that was passed authorized county commissioners to levy a tax....Any township having five resident families was declared a school district, and school funds were to be apportioned according to the number of pupils in each district. District clerks were required to make a census of all persons in their districts between the ages of four and twenty-one.

(Folwell 1969b, 136)

Local School Management/Organization

The first unit of administration for the "common school" was the township. However, because of population dispersal, road conditions, and transportation problems, it immediately became apparent that the township was too large a local organizational unit. In 1851, legislation was enacted that allowed county commissioners to establish smaller

school districts thereby aiding the establishment of the neighborhood controlled common school. In 1857, at the request of several villages and cities, a law was passed allowing the legislature, upon request, to establish special charter school districts (this would be struck down by constitutional amendment in 1892). An attempt was made to reestablish the township as the unit of organization through legislation in 1861, but the neighborhood plan was restored in 1862. In 1865 incorporated towns and villages were given the authority to establish independent school districts with the powers to employ a superintendent and establish a high school (no state funds were provided to establish high schools or high school departments). Eventually independent school districts became the preferred structure for local school management.

Taxation/Finance

Legislation was also passed in the first Territorial Legislature (1849) authorizing universal taxation and the creation of a permanent school fund to support common schools. The permanent school fund was not established until 1862.

An issue that would prove important throughout Minnesota history, fiscal disparities, was first considered when the Territorial Legislature determined how to administer the lands received as a result of the Northwest Ordinance. When it was suggested that each township should be responsible for disposing of the land and investing the proceeds, it was noted by some legislators that in many townships this land was worthless (swamp land, peat bogs, or under water). In other townships the sixteenth and the thirty-sixth sections were very valuable. If each township managed their own lands there would be a great disparity in the amounts of money available for the schools from township to township. As a result, legislation was passed making it the state's responsibility to oversee the sale of these lands and use the proceeds from the sales to establish a permanent school fund (Kiehle 1903, 17-20).

In addition to a permanent school fund, schools in this early period received support from three kinds of taxes:

- a county tax on property, fixed by the legislature, and collected and distributed by the county (based on rules determined by the legislature);
- a special school levy that districts were allowed to make, though it was limited by state law; and
- a one to two mill state tax levied on all the taxable property of the state.

Counties have, since 1849, been allowed to assess property and collect property taxes for the operation of school districts. Prior to 1862, some school districts charged

tuition in addition to taxing. This practice was prohibited by a legislative act in 1862 that made it clear that schools were to be free to all "persons...between the ages of 5 and 21 years" (Greer 1902, 21). In 1854 the legislature directed that schools had to meet for a minimum of three months during the year in order to use the funds collected through county taxes. In 1874 it was ruled that these funds, instead of being shared equally among the districts in the county, were to be distributed according to the exact amount collected from the respective district. This policy remained in effect with only slight modification until 1961.

The state tax for school was not levied until 1887. These funds were to be allocated "in proportion to the number of scholars between the ages of 5 and 21 who have been enrolled and have been in attendance forty days in the public schools that have had at least a five-months' term within the year by a qualified teacher" (Greer 1902, 20). When this did not have the expected impact of improving rural schools, the legislature prohibited any district from collecting from the state fund an amount greater than that levied through the authorized special levy unless the district levied the maximum mill rate allowed (Greer, 1902, 20).

University of Minnesota

Although legislation and a federal land grant encouraging the establishment of the University of Minnesota preceded the establishment of the state of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota did not function as a true university until 1863. The first full-time president was installed in 1869. Subsequently the university had a major role in the development of public education in Minnesota.

Normal Schools

The first normal school--a school created to train teachers--was authorized in 1858 and began operation in Winona in 1860, only to close in 1864 because of the Civil War. After the war additional normal schools were established.

State Regulation of Teachers

The rapid expansion of normal schools occurred simultaneously with the development of the teaching profession. The Minnesota State Teachers Association, later to become the Minnesota Education Association, was founded in 1860. The state first regulated the teaching profession in a decentralized fashion. Teachers were selected by each community using whatever criteria they chose. Gradually, however, the authority to determine teacher criteria was moved to the state. Normal schools (later renamed

teachers colleges) played an important role in the process of certifying teachers and began receiving state funding in 1867.

High School

Although the existence of high school was recognized by the state legislature as early as 1862, when county auditors were required to report the number of high schools in existence on a yearly basis, and although a course of study was developed by the state in 1872, high schools did not receive state funding until 1878. Delayed support was due in major part to the resistance by state residents to supporting more schooling than they thought necessary. Most saw high school as important only for preparing youth for college and saw college as far beyond what was necessary to achieve the basic purposes of education. In 1878, however, a high school board consisting of the superintendent of public instruction, the president of the University of Minnesota, and a gubernatorial representative was authorized by the state legislature. Each high school maintaining a minimum course of study and meeting a prescribed number of months per year was eligible to receive \$400. It was not expected that a significant number of students would attend high school. In fact, across the nation high schools were called "the people's colleges." As high schools were asked more and more to prepare youth for work and as they became more affordable, more citizens viewed high schools as a necessity.

State Supervision

Though slow to develop, state supervision was envisioned early in Minnesota history. The first attempt to create state supervision was made in 1854 when the state appointed its first superintendent of public instruction. The position, however, had no authority until the 1870s. In fact, during the Civil War the duties of this office were attached to those of the secretary of state as a budget saving measure. There was throughout most of this period considerable lobbying on the part of governors, superintendents of public instruction, and some county commissioners calling for closer and more complete state supervision.

Uniformity Access

The concept of uniformity is larger than just the issue of fiscal disparity. The idea of uniformity in curriculum and materials was implicit in the state constitution. Uniform textbook legislation was passed in 1861, 1877, and 1881, but by 1900 uniform textbooks were no longer required. Uniformity was achieved by requiring that a common curriculum be followed, allowing texts to be chosen by local districts.

Compulsory Attendance

In 1885, Minnesota's first compulsory attendance law was passed. Notably, children were excused from attendance if:

- the parent or guardian was too poor to clothe the child,
- the child was physically or mentally unable to attend,
- the child had already acquired the ordinary school training, or
- there was no school within two miles of home.

The effect of this law was to require school attendance in large, urban communities, ignoring the fact that 80 percent of Minnesota's student-aged population was widely disbursed and in the rural areas.

Public/Nonpublic School Issues

The concept of nonsectarianism was the last key element of the public school system to appear and be dealt with during this early period. According to Folwell:

Common schools....although scholastic in purpose....were expected to inculcate the Christian morality accepted in their several neighborhoods. School began the day with a Bible reading, often accompanied by a prayer or a hymn....The schools were just as Christian as their communities.

(Folwell 1969b, 171)

Apparently, it was assumed that the religious training that did occur would be consistent with Protestantism. With the increased migration of non-Protestants, primarily Catholics, in the late 1800s and with the advent of a universal tax to support public schools, conflict over religious training developed. Minnesota became embroiled in church-school issues early in the development of schools. As more non-Protestants arrived, and communities grew, cooperative efforts among religious factions were replaced by conflict. The legislature, in 1877, prepared an amendment to the state constitution forbidding the appropriation of any public money or property for the support of schools in which "distinctive doctrines, creed or tenets of any particular Christian or other religious sect are promulgated or taught." When concern was raised that public schools would become devoid of religion and therefore morality, the legislature responded with an act in 1881 authorizing, but not requiring, teachers in public schools to give instruction in the:

...elements of social and moral science, including industry, order, economy, punctuality, patience, self-denial, health, purity, temperance, cleanliness, honesty, truth, justice, politeness, peace, fidelity, philanthropy, patriotism, self-respect, hope, perserverance, courage, self-reliance, gratitude, pity, mercy, kindness, reflection, and the will.

(Luetmer 1970, 63-64)

Subsequent local controversies between Catholics and Protestants moved towards resolution as the public schools became increasingly secular and private, sectarian schools became more prevalent.

Thus by the close of the 19th century, Minnesota's system of public education had begun to assume many of the characteristics that can be seen today. However, the system had not yet approached either the systems of more settled states or the system envisioned by the Minnesota promoters of a public education system.

ADJUSTMENTS AND EXPANSIONS 1901-1944

For the most part changes in the Minnesota public school system, 1900-1944, consolidated what had already been established and were carried out in the context of two world wars, a depression, and increasingly rapid industrialization. The school's role in preparing youth for work was expanded; most of the legislation after 1901 was designed to take advantage of federal enabling legislation and grants encouraging vocational training.

Significant immigration during the period enhanced the need for common schools, which were seen as a mechanism for Americanizing children and adult immigrants. Funds for adult classes in general school subjects and for Americanization were authorized in Minnesota in 1905 (Engum 1969, 632) and were common by 1921.

Minnesota's schools were also greatly affected by the growing influence of the "progressive movement" and its emphasis on the child-centered school, learning by doing, and schools as human and social service centers. One result was an increase in the number of months school districts were required to be in session to receive state aid. Minnesota "progressives" also achieved passage of kindergarten legislation in 1901, recreation programs in 1937, and the inclusion of school lunches in the 1930s.

State Supervision

The state moved very quickly during this period to centralize and control several aspects of the system. Even before a state Department of Education was established, a law was enacted in 1913 that called for a division of buildings that would prescribe rules for the erection, enlargement, and change of school buildings (Laws of Minnesota 1913, Chapter 550).

One year later a legislative commission, initially requested by the Minnesota Education Association, recommended the creation of a State Board of Education that would encompass the duties and powers that were then held by the Office of Public Instruction, the High School Board, the Normal School Board, the State Librar,

Commission, and the boards for the Special Schools for the Deaf and Blind. When the commission's report was acted on in 1919 only the Normal School Board was omitted.

State Regulation of Teachers

In 1913 the bachelor's degree was fixed as a minimum requirement for high school teachers and in 1915 candidates for teacher certificates were required to have completed thirty-six weeks of professional training courses. Courses at the University of Minnesota, the state normal schools, and state high schools or approved non-Minnesota high schools were accepted to meet those requirements. By 1927 all laws calling for the examination of teachers before licensure were repealed.

In 1929 the authority to determine standards for certifying teachers was completely vested in the state Board of Education and certification required professional training in an institution maintained or accredited by the state.

Local School Management/Organization

During this period the primary activity in local school management involved consolidation of school districts.

Early school consolidation legislation had very little effect; in 1900 there were approximately 8,000 school districts, in 1905 there were 7,900. The first meaningful school consolidation bill was passed in 1911, offering incentives to newly consolidated districts. These included reimbursement of one-fourth of the cost for new construction, if the school met eight months of the year, and transportation for pupils living long distances from the school building. This resulted in the consolidation of only 170 districts over the succeeding five years (Engum 1969). The primary reason districts refused to consolidate was that larger school districts required increased taxes to support the new school buildings (Engelhardt 1934, p. 12). In addition "prevailing road conditions and the existing system for transportation continued to limit the size of the merged districts" (Kielb 1984, 4). Finally, most communities regardless of their size, road conditions, or fiscal capability felt they could better control their schools if the schools remained in their community (Folwell 1969b, 139).

Compulsory Attendance

During this period compulsory attendance laws became more stringent and were used to accomplish various related objectives.

In 1911 a compulsory attendance law was passed that narrowed the reasons for excusing attendance. Poverty was no longer an accepted excuse. Attendance through the

eighth grade was required, but some accommodation to young people working in agriculture was permitted.

In 1923 the compulsory attendance law allowed children to be excused for up to three hours of religious instruction as long as the instruction did not occur in a public school building. And, in 1941, compliance with the compulsory attendance law required "attendance at a school taught by teachers 'whose qualifications were essentially equivalent to the minimum standards for public school teaching'" (Luetmer 1970, 393-394). This law had serious implications for private and parochial schools.

Public/Nonpublic School Issues

The secular nature of public schools continued to develop during this period, although court rulings regarding religion and schools were mixed. The wearing of religious garb while teaching in public school was declared unconstitutional by the Minnesota attorney general in 1904. In 1905 the legislature revised the earlier law requiring morality training to a single sentence, "The teachers in all public schools shall give instruction in morals, in physiology and hygiene, and in the effects of narcotics and stimulants" (Revised Laws 1905 in Folwell 1969b, 172-173). Schools were allowed to be used as places of worship and for Sunday school by legislation passed in 1907.

In 1927 the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that it was not unconstitutional for a teacher to read in schools extracts from the Old Testament of the King James version of the Bible. This ruling remained in effect until 1963 when the United States Supreme Court ruled to the contrary (*Abington Township District School v. Schempp*).

Much of the tension between public and sectarian schools was eased during the depression as both were hard pressed to keep school doors open. Cooperation became more prevalent, facilitated by the United States Supreme Court. In the *Cochran* case (1930) the court determined that textbooks could be distributed free to students regardless of where students attended school. In developing the "child benefit" theory in this case, the courts ruled that the child benefited from this activity and not the schools. As such, this did not violate the First Amendment mandating separation of church and state. However, other rulings by the United States Supreme Court against direct aid to sectarian schools assured that the issue of support for these schools was still unresolved.

Uniformity/Access

Between 1900 and 1943 concern for uniformity of experience within the public education system was replaced by concern for access and equal opportunity. More and more attention was directed toward assuring that youth were not denied access to

education because of geographical, social, or racial barriers or because of physical or mental impairments. Legislation in 1901 encouraged consolidation and provided state aid for transportation. In 1915 the legislature passed the first laws allowing reimbursement aid for transportation. Transportation became an increasingly important part of outstate school budgets.

American Indians were allotted their first state aid in 1917 for teacher wages and textbooks. In 1937 the legislature turned this program over to the State Department of Education with instructions to negotiate contracts with the federal government and to hire a supervisor with full-time responsibilities for American Indian education (Engum 1969, 633).

High Schools

The greatest growth within the K-12 system in Minnesota during this period occurred in the high schools. Among the more common explanations for this growth are:

- the changing high school curriculum placed more emphasis on providing vocational skills rather than preparing youth for college,
- the idea that high schools had been added to elementary schools as the "accepted requirement for general admission to adult life" (Butts 1978, 318-319), and
- the reality that business and industry were more often requiring high school diplomas for their better entry-level positions.

Taxation/Finance

Minnesota's method of taxation to support schools did not change significantly during this period but the amount of money school districts had available dropped precipitously. The period during the depression was especially difficult. Among the problems were:

- expenditures per pupil decreased from \$108.95 in 1924 to \$77.21 in 1933,
- there were 500 fewer teachers in 1933 than in 1930 and 11,000 more pupils,
- increased enrollment had occurred where costs of school was greatest, namely in the secondary schools.

POST-WAR TO PRE-SPUTNIK: 1944-1956

Though relatively brief, this period saw several changes that had a lasting effect on schools, though the effect was not apparent until later in the century.

The first cracks in the "progressive education" movement began to appear during this period. Many people, some educators included, were disturbed about what they saw in the public schools. They felt that as the experiences of children were incorporated into the curriculum, pedagogy was being softened, barriers between subjects were being violated, and children were actively participating at all times (Katz 1975, 117). In addition, they noted that when youth were allowed to make choices, they too often seemed to choose the softer, easier subjects and vocations. It was felt that greater discipline in the classroom and more control of students was needed along with a "no-frills," "back to basics" philosophy.

On the whole, however, the concept of student-centered education, a "progressive" staple since the 1920s, continued to dominate as more and more effort was placed in helping youth determine their own desired direction in life. This became particularly important in high schools, where guidance counseling began to be seen as essential to helping youth who were faced with numerous complex vocational and life options.

Another significant event of this period was the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954) in which it was determined that racially segregated schools ("separate but equal") were by their very nature unequal. The effects of this landmark decision against racial segregation would have little consequence in Minnesota until the mid-1960s.

Local School Management/Organization

In 1945-46 there were 7,657 school districts in the state. In 1947, legislation was passed that called for establishing county survey committees to recommend reorganization that would provide for more efficient and economical education. This legislation was in part responsible for reducing by 1961-62 the number of non-operating school districts that transported pupils to nearby districts.

In 1947, legislation introduced the concept of "weighted pupil units" to Minnesota tax finance. This was used to help compensate for the differentiating costs of education at the kindergarten, elementary, and secondary levels.

Throughout this period, local property taxes became burdensome for many Minnesotans. The legislature took a significant step toward lessening this problem when it established the Equalization Aid Review Committee in 1955. This committee consisted of

the commissioners of administration, taxation, and education. They established equalized valuations for school districts that were comparable for all areas of the state. The adjusted assessed valuations became the base on which state aids were distributed to local school districts.

Public/Nonpublic School Issues

This period saw the continued movement of Minnesota's public schools toward secularism. As a response, parochial schools continued to grow. Though public sentiment was ambivalent, United States Supreme Court rulings concerning the guarantee of separation of church and state assured the public school secularization movement. As this occurred, many sought ways to fund sectarian schools, reasoning that if all sects were treated equally this would not violate the doctrine of separation of church and state. The Supreme Court ruling in the Everson case (1947) allowed public support for transporting children, regardless of the school attended, and continued the "child benefit" concept. Minnesota did not pass a law providing universal transportation of school children until 1969.

In 1955, however, the Minnesota legislature did pass a law allowing a \$200 per child income tax deduction to cover expenses paid by parents sending their children to both public and non-public schools.

SUCCESSIVE REFORM MOVEMENTS: 1957 TO THE PRESENT

This period in Minnesota and national education history can be characterized by successive reform movements stimulated, directly or indirectly, by political, social, economic, and technological development. The launching of the Soviet Union's satellite, Sputnik, the civil rights movement, the escalation of the Vietnam War and the resulting peace movement, heightened concern about the environment, the energy crisis, and numerous electronic innovations all affected schools in various ways. The specific impact that some of these events had on schools will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter. Two events that had broad and long-term impact on Minnesota's public schools were the launching of Sputnik and the civil rights movement.

Sputnik accelerated the disenchantment with the "progressive" movement so that by the end of 1957 this perspective on educational philosophy, curriculum, and pedagogy was weakened. Public opinion was strong enough that reform of the schools was taken away from the hands of educators. Many believed that the schools had failed and that nothing short of major reform would solve the problem. In response to this, Congress passed the

National Defense Education Act (1958) and within three years President John F. Kennedy committed the United States to landing a man on the moon by 1970.

In September of 1957 another event of equally long term significance occurred in Little Rock, Arkansas when the governor of the state refused to allow black children to attend Central High for the first time. Although the civil rights movement had started in earnest with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, the "Little Rock incident," brought national attention for the first time to "the inhumanity and absurdity of racial discrimination" (Ravitch 1983, 139).

The civil rights movement had significance beyond desegregation. The quest for equality and equal opportunity by blacks would awaken a similar concern among many other groups. In Minnesota this meant that services provided by schools were expanded as schools were obliged to help youth understand themselves and their society. As the emphasis on cultural pluralism grew, there was greater demand for the inclusion of positive materials and exclusion of material thought culturally biased or inhibiting. Blacks; Hispanics; American Indians; Asians; women; advocates for the physically, mentally, and emotionally impaired; the aged; the poor; and homosexuals all perused school textbooks and examined curricula to insure that their groups were not represented in a stereotypic fashion.

The state expanded its effort to prepare youth for work by expanding high schools and granting greater authority to Area Vocational and Technical Institutes. High schools, especially in the larger urban areas, began focusing more on preparing youth for some form of post-secondary education, primarily community colleges and four year colleges or universities. The AVTIs focused more on preparing youth for work (especially in occupations where training might be obtained in a relatively short time).

Local School Management/Organization

The state, during this period, continued its efforts to decrease the number of school districts in the state. In 1960, 764 of the state's 2,581 school districts were non-operating. An additional 1,371 were only operating elementary schools. The enrollment in 2,068 districts was less than 100. The 1963 legislature passed the state's first mandatory reorganization statute. It provided, with only minor exceptions, that any organized school district not maintaining a "classified school" (elementary or secondary) after July 1, 1965, was to be dissolved (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 547, Section 3, 1963 in Hooker and Mueller 1970, 26). Most of the non-operating districts chose to align themselves with districts offering only elementary schools.

In 1967 after an additional report from the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization, additional legislation was passed requiring "all districts not offering a secondary educational program...to merge with a district that maintained a secondary school by 1971" (Kielb 1984, 6). By 1972, 446 districts were reported to be in operation in Minnesota.

In 1979 Minnesota law required that its 432 independent school districts maintain elementary and secondary programs. Because of declining enrollments, districts also were authorized to "discontinue any grade, kindergarten through 12th grade or portions of those grades, and provide for that instruction in a cooperating district" (Kielb 1984, 7). For similar reasons, a law passed by the 1983 legislature allowed districts with enrollments of less than 375 in the seventh through twelfth grades to contract for instruction of these students in other districts. Additional voluntary consolidation legislation passed in 1980 encouraged consolidation between independent school districts.

The legislature has also encouraged other forms of cooperative and joint powers arrangements including Educational Cooperative Units (1976), Secondary Cooperative Centers (1974), and Special Education Cooperatives (1983).

State Regulation of Teachers

Significant changes occurred from the late 1950s onward in the licensing of teachers. In 1962, legislation was passed requiring a bachelors degree if one was to be granted an elementary teaching certificate. In 1969, the legislature eliminated the issuance of new life-time certificates and required teachers to renew their license every five years. By 1971 the Minnesota Board of Education began requiring teachers to show evidence of continuing professional development as a condition of renewal. Teachers were required to provide evidence of human relations training in 1974 in order to be certified or recertified to teach in Minnesota.

Responsibility for licensing most teachers was transferred from the Department of Education to the Board of Teaching in 1974 (Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board 1984d, 7-8). This culminated a process begun in 1964 when teacher organizations began advocating that teachers become more responsible for regulating their own profession.

During this period teachers gained higher salaries and other professional benefits through the increased efforts of their unions, the Minnesota Education Association and the Minnesota Federation of Teachers. The effectiveness of unions and collective bargaining was due, partly, to the passage of a series of statutes affecting state employees. Of greatest significance were the Meet and Confer Act (1967) and the Public Employment

Labor Relations Act (1971). The Meet and Confer Act "created a framework for formal discussions between teachers and school boards, but did not establish the right of teachers to elect an exclusive representative nor did it provide for a conclusive impasse resolution mechanism in the event that the parties could not reach agreement" (Lentz 1984, 1-2). The Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA), though more comprehensive, did not authorize strikes but allowed the employer to refuse to submit to arbitration even though settlements were not binding. After heavy lobbying from teacher unions, PELRA was amended in 1973 to allow strikes if employers refused to submit to binding arbitration or to implement an arbitrated award. Finally, in 1980, the legislature authorized the right to strike, with time and prior notice restrictions, and eliminated the employers right to force arbitration (Lentz, 1984, 4-5).

Still another change came in 1980 when legislation was passed to help new teachers enter the profession by allowing tenured teachers to either retire early with incentives or to try a different profession for three years without loss of seniority or retirement contributions. This legislation was significantly revised, however, in 1983 because of the added burden of costs to the state.

Public Nonpublic School Issues

During this period issues of public support for non-public schools continued. As enrollment in parochial and private schools increased, the state moved to more closely regulate their activities. According to one author, these regulations greatly increased the operating costs of non-public schools (Neal 1980, 245). Yet, the Minnesota legislature has consistently attempted to reduce the cost of state regulations for non-public schools by providing state aid. Minnesota has not been alone in this. According to Butts.

During the 1950s and 1960s almost every conceivable variation of practice and of legal effort was dreamed up in order to try to circumvent the basic principle (of separation of church and state).

(Butts 1978, 291)

In 1965 Minnesota passed a Transportation of School Children Act that mandated providing bus transportation for all children regardless of the school (public or non-public). In 1971 Minnesota passed a tax credit bill that allowed a credit of \$50, \$100, and \$150 respectively for kindergarten, elementary, and secondary pupils attending non-public schools. The law was declared unconstitutional in 1974 by the Minnesota Supreme Court and denied a hearing by the United States Supreme Court in 1975. Proponents of non-public school aid drafted a new bill in 1975 which was passed in 1976. The estimated cost of this Non-Public School Aid Bill was \$24 million. According to Neal:

Up to \$14 million would go to the public schools to buy non-religious books and equipment, which would be loaned to non-public schools and their students...The remaining \$10 million would go to public schools to hire counselors, psychologists, speech teachers, remedial instructors, and other "auxiliary service" people, who would be sent to work in private schools.

(Neal 1980, 257-258)

Although this act has been amended several times since 1976 (1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, and 1984) the basic intent of the legislation has not changed significantly.

State Supervision

Numerous powers of authority and regulation were granted to the state Department of Education between the years 1958 and 1984. With almost every increase in responsibility accorded to the schools (responsibility for racial desegregation, for eliminating sexism, and for mainstreaming handicapped children, for example) corresponding authority and responsibility was given to the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education. The Department of Education has had the responsibility for overseeing all of the reforms and changes that occurred during this period.

Taxation/Finance

The Minnesota legislature continued to fluctuate during this period between indifference and concern regarding fiscal disparity. Since 1915 there had been efforts to allocate an increasing proportion of state aid on the basis of school district property wealth, providing greater funding to poorer districts. But a more significant change occurred in 1957 when the legislature established a minimum spending level for all school districts--to meet "basic" educational needs--funded largely through local taxes. In addition to establishing a minimum spending level to assure some measure of equal access to education, districts were compensated for variations in their wealth through adjustments in the foundation aid from the state (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 34).

The legislature attempted to provide tax relief again in 1967, but by 1970 "public concern about the problem had taken the political form of a 'tax revolt'" (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 34). To further ease the tax burden the state property tax was repealed.

In 1970 the Citizen's League issued a report entitled New Formulas for Revenue Sharing in Minnesota. The report, concentrating on the distribution of revenue, in part recommended:

- emphasis be placed on expanding state support for elementary and secondary education up to the average per pupil unit operating expenditure in each region,

- the development of a more equitable basis for the allocation of foundation aid,
- extra assistance for districts with socio-economically disadvantaged pupils,
- the development of more accurate indices for measuring a district's financial ability and its revenue raising efforts (Mazzoni 1980, 54-55).

Many of the proposals contained in this report were ultimately included in the Omnibus Tax Bill (1971) which raised the foundation aid level and limited the tax rate that a district could levy against property. Throughout the remainder of the decade the legislature "would expand categorical aid for disadvantaged students and create supplemental and special aid for districts suffering from decreasing enrollments. The effect of these changes was to have districts rely more heavily on the state for financing K-12 education in Minnesota" (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 34-36).

Changes in financing were made in the early 1980s that had the effect of shifting more of the financial burden for schools to the local districts and therefore to property taxes. Adjustments were made in 1983 and 1984 to lessen these effects. (Chapter III will examine this issue in greater detail.)

Uniformity/Access

Improving the access to schools for different kinds of students was one of the most important events to happen in education during this period. The populations most affected were the physically, mentally, and emotionally impaired and minorities.

In 1957 the Legislature created a State Advisory Commission on Handicapped Children, mandated that local school districts provided special services for the speech, hearing, and visually impaired; the educable and trainable mentally impaired; students with physical or health impairments; the homebound; and pupils with special learning difficulties. This law was revised in 1959, 1966, 1975, and 1981 but the services to be provided and the requirements of school districts have remained substantively the same (Educational Management Services, Inc. 1975, 1-4). (Chapter III contains a more in-depth discussion of the effects this legislation has had on the operation of schools.)

In 1967 the state Board of Education took the first steps in developing a school desegregation policy by approving a one-page statement on racial imbalance and discrimination. However, neither reporting procedures nor penalties for non-compliance was prescribed. The Board, in 1973, adopted mandatory statewide regulations.

Prior to this, in 1972, in NAACP and the Committee for Integrated Education v. Minneapolis School Board, desegregation of the Minneapolis public schools was mandated by the federal court. No school was allowed to have more than a 30 percent minority enrollment. In order to meet the court order Minneapolis undertook a major busing

program. St. Paul, not under court order, met the state mandate to desegregate by a combination of busing and curriculum restructuring in the form of magnet schools.

Despite these attempts at desegregation, both cities, due to increasing minority enrollments, had difficulty remaining in compliance with the desegregation requirements. The problem was eased somewhat when the courts began allowing, under certain conditions, up to 50 percent minority enrollment in each school. (See Chapter III for a discussion of the effect desegregation requirements had on schools in the 1970s and 1980s.)

HISTORIC TRENDS AND CURRENT REFORM

The people of the state of Minnesota have always had a strong interest in education. For the first hundred years of the state history most of the initiative for developing and improving the system of K-12 education fell to politicians and educators. They pushed to have the system established, and once established consistently and, for the most part, effectively, they expanded the purposes of education to accommodate changes in the people and society of Minnesota.

Initially, most of this was accomplished with only reluctant support from the citizenry. The support was reluctant because a centralized school system as envisioned by public education proponents had no place in an essentially wilderness community. However, as the population increased, as larger communities developed, and as the state matured socially and economically, Minnesotans vigorously supported the concept of public schools. This public support remained strong up to the late 1950s with only minor exception.

For most of this period, 1900-1956, most Minnesotans were more than willing to leave the running of the schools to the "experts" whom they advised through their schools boards and PTAs. Educators and politicians, bolstered by progressive educational philosophy, felt this was as it should be.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, however, the schools were confronted by a series of reform movements, almost all of which were initiated outside the schools. Educators, however, found ways to incorporate these changes into the schools.

Some of these reforms and changes were consistent with the historic development of public schools in Minnesota. Providing better access to different groups of students, expanding the curriculum, even promoting a better society through change could be easily accommodated by the schools. The "progressive" philosophy had always championed these ideals. Other changes and reforms aimed at special student populations (the gifted, the

mentally retarded, and the culturally disadvantaged, for example) that required being more sensitive to the individual needs of students, have been more difficult to achieve. Schools have always had difficulty reconciling the needs of the majority with the needs of its many minorities. Many of various school movements of the 1960s and early 1970s were an attempt to achieve this. Most were short circuited first by the energy crisis and later by inflation and declining enrollments.

The current reform discussion in Minnesota is in many ways an attempt to accomplish many of the deferred agendas of the 1960s and early 1970s. Most of today's reform proposals can be traced to this period. School-based management is not unlike the "neighborhood school movement." The call for learner outcome objectives, contract learning, and performance measures were integral and important aspects of both the "free school" and "open school" movements. Even the proposals advocating choice and the elimination of the last two years of high school have historical roots in the "deschooling movement." (The Minnesota House, in fact, passed a voucher bill in 1973.)

Attention to public education has always been high in Minnesota and efforts to change and reform are not unusual. Throughout its history, however, several themes have predominated and seem to serve as a kind of base from which the rest of the educational system has been built.

A. Tradition of Local Control

Minnesota citizens have consistently sought to have the locus of control for their schools as close to home as possible. This has been especially important in rural and small town Minnesota, where district autonomy has been strongly guarded. Proposals that purport to enhance local control are received warmly. On the other hand, proposals that appear to wrest control out of local hands are not.

Expanding State Supervision

For much of its history the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education have shown a strong tendency to assume additional authority and control over local school districts. As indicated earlier, educators have always envisioned a centralized K-12 public education system under state control and authority. This was thought to be the best way to insure first uniformity and later equal educational opportunity for all students of the state. Efficiency and effectiveness are also thought to be more likely within a centralized system.

Fluctuating Attention to Fiscal Disparity

Minnesotans' interest in overcoming fiscal disparity has waxed and waned throughout Minnesota history. During times of prosperity the wisdom of insuring uniformity of experiences for all students, regardless of the relative fiscal strength of the county in which the student resides, has been widely accepted. However, when the state has experienced a fiscal shortfall, concern about fiscal disparity has been virtually ignored.

Continuing Regulation of Teachers

One way or another the teaching profession has been regulated and, in recent years, enhanced by the state. Since the mid-1960s the trend has been for teachers to have more say in regulating their own affairs. The State Department of Education and the legislature, however, continue to develop legislation that regulates and affects teachers, their teaching, and the teaching profession.

Perennial Concern for Equity

Many would say that with the exception of declining enrollments, concern about access has been the biggest change issue to confront schools over the last thirty, and certainly the last twenty, years. Minnesota's education history has been a history of including more and more kinds of students.

Support of Non-Public Schools

There has always been sentiment for state support of non-public schools, particularly when this support is indirect or follows the student. This type of aid has been ruled constitutional by both the Minnesota Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court. Both courts have found direct aid to non-public schools unconstitutional.

* * * *

These six trends have been apparent in Minnesota history. They must be taken into account in proposing innovation or reform in K-12 education in Minnesota. To say that these trends must be taken into account does not mean that they must be accommodated. However, they represent a strong tradition reflecting significant public sentiment over the years, sentiment that has had a significant statewide following.

III. THE 1970s AND EARLY 1980s: CONTRACTION OF THE SYSTEM AND EXPANSION OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

Minnesota's K-12 public education system has undergone significant change during the past decade as a result of demographic, political, economic, and social trends. These trends have, on the one hand, contracted the public education system and, on the other hand, asked it to take on additional responsibilities. Understanding the changes engendered by these trends is critical in assessing the current condition of public education and evaluating reform strategies.

THREE MAJOR CIRCUMSTANCES LEAD TO CONTRACTION OF MINNESOTA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

During the past decade Minnesota public education has been faced with sharply declining enrollments and new fiscal constraints while at the same time experiencing increasing costs for providing education. Combined, these three sets of circumstances have led to contraction of the system.

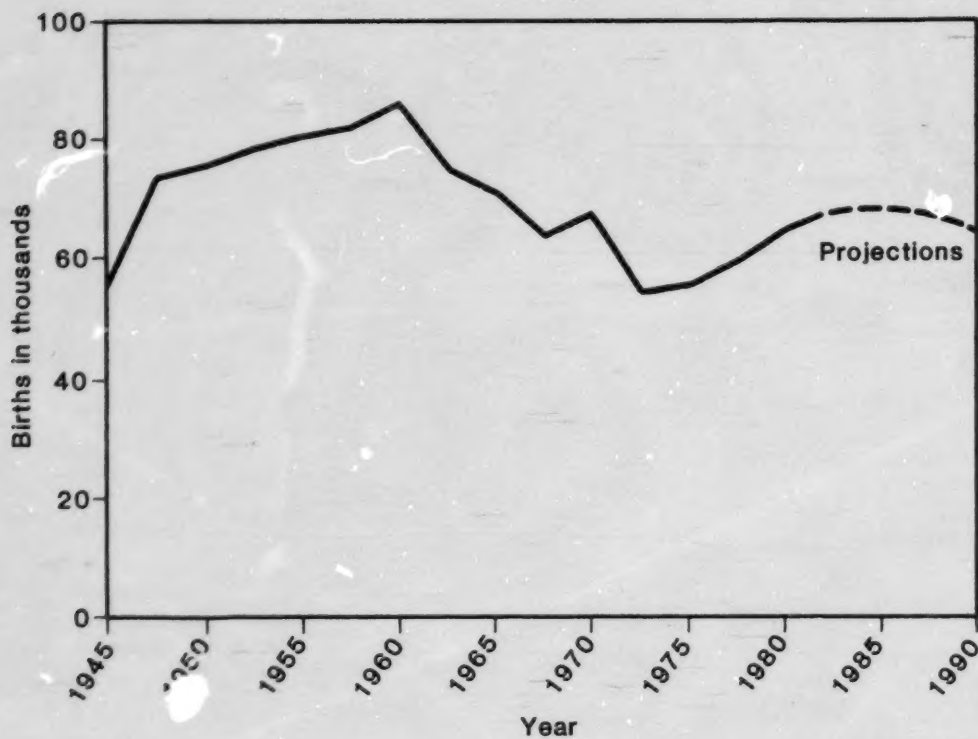
Public School Enrollments Decline Dramatically

Minnesota, like all other midwestern states, has experienced a decrease in public school enrollments greater than the nation as a whole. Between 1972-73 and 1982-83 Minnesota's elementary and secondary enrollments dropped 21 percent compared to a national decline of 14 percent. Only fourteen states experienced a greater decline. During this period, enrollments in Minnesota elementary schools declined 23.8 percent while secondary enrollment decreased 18.1 percent (Feistritzer 1983, 8-12).

This drop directly reflects the state and national decline in the number of school age children. Nationally, the secondary school age population is expected to decline for another decade while the decrease in the elementary school age population is expected to reverse in the late 1980s (Twentieth Century Fund 1983, 41-42). Figure 1 shows the history of births in Minnesota and projections for the remainder of the decade. The birth rate has increased since the early 1970s and is projected to stabilize in the mid-1980s and resume a slight decline before the end of the decade.

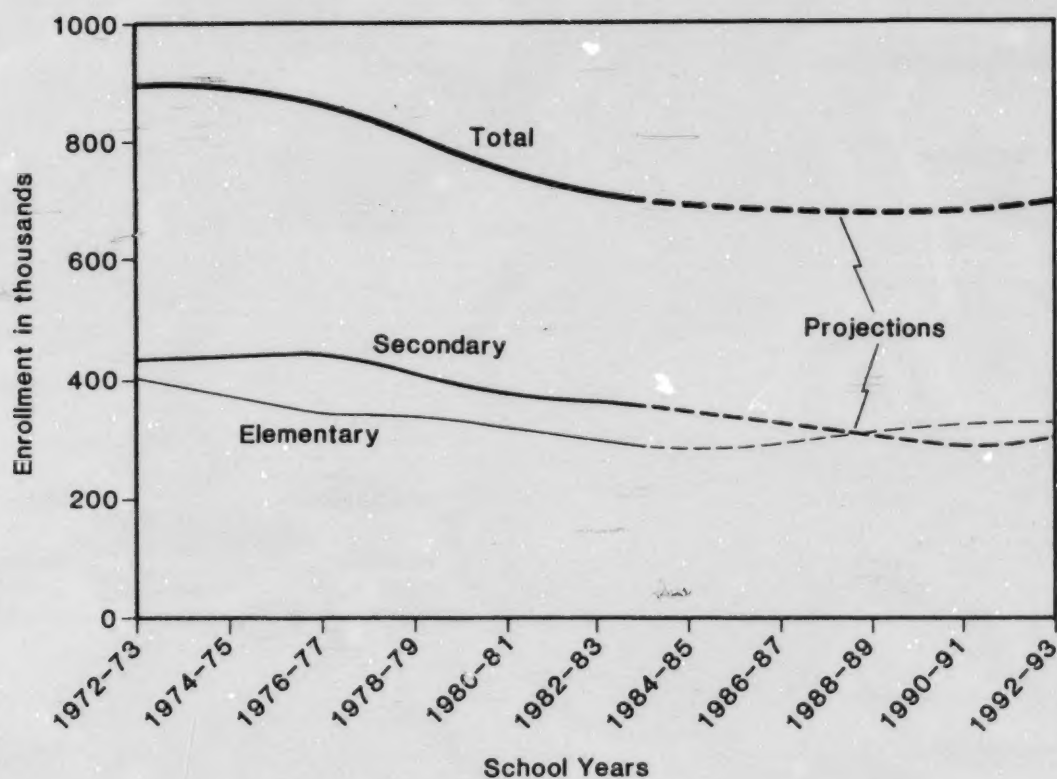
Figure 2 illustrates Minnesota's public school enrollment history and projections. The state's total elementary and secondary enrollment is expected to continue to decline slightly through the rest of this decade and begin rising in the 1990-91 school year. However, elementary enrollment will begin to rise first, in school year 1985-86 (Minnesota Department of Education 1984h, 2, 5).

FIGURE 1
MINNESOTA BIRTHS 1945-1990



SOURCE: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Minnesota Public School Enrollment Projections--1984 Edition (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 3.

FIGURE 2
MINNESOTA'S AVERAGE DAILY PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT,
1972-73 THROUGH 1992-93



SOURCE: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Minnesota Public School Enrollment Projections--1984 Edition (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 2.

Schools Hit With New Fiscal Constraints

Minnesota public schools have been among those public institutions hit hard by fiscal constraints in the early 1980s. These constraints reflect two significant governmental events: a financial crisis in Minnesota state government, which disrupted state education aid programs, and, to a lesser degree, a diminishing federal role in public education.

Minnesota state government, after a long period of revenue expansion, suffered severe revenue shortfalls from the summer of 1980 to the end of the calendar year 1982. This crisis largely reflected the slowed economic growth associated with the recession on the state and national level and changes in the nature of both the national and Minnesota economies. During this period the state legislature, through numerous special sessions, instituted cutbacks in state education aid programs and slowed the growth of property tax relief to local school districts as part of a series of budgetary cutbacks to state and local government (Peek and Wilson, 1983a).

Table 1 and Figure 3 show how a ten-year pattern of school financing was disrupted during the fiscal crisis beginning in school year 1981-82. During school year 1982-83 total state-local revenue to school districts dropped. The state share of funding fell sharply to 1974-75 levels, forcing local districts to take up the slack in 1982-83. The results were a retrenchment at the local level and significantly greater reliance on local property taxes for funding schools. It was during this period of retrenchment that many Minnesota school teachers and other staff were laid off. This will be discussed in more detail later. Since school year 1982-83, total state-local revenue has resumed its ten-year pattern, although the local share of education funding remains greater than it was prior to the crisis.

At the same time, numerous federal education programs were consolidated into an education block grant and a number of programs were significantly reduced, including funding for aid to the disadvantaged, child nutrition programs, and vocational education aid. These changes reflected the Reagan administration's attitude toward federal aid to education and reduction of public domestic spending in general (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 51-64).

Costs of Providing Public Education Grow

Public education has, like other public institutions, faced increasing costs to provide its services. This occurred primarily as a result of inflation. During the decade 1973-74 to 1982-83 the Minneapolis-St. Paul Consumer Price Index rose almost 120 percent (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, A-24). While growing less than inflation, average salaries for all licensed staff rose 110 percent during this period (Minnesota Department of Education 1984e, 19). A detailed breakdown of these salaries is included in Appendix A.

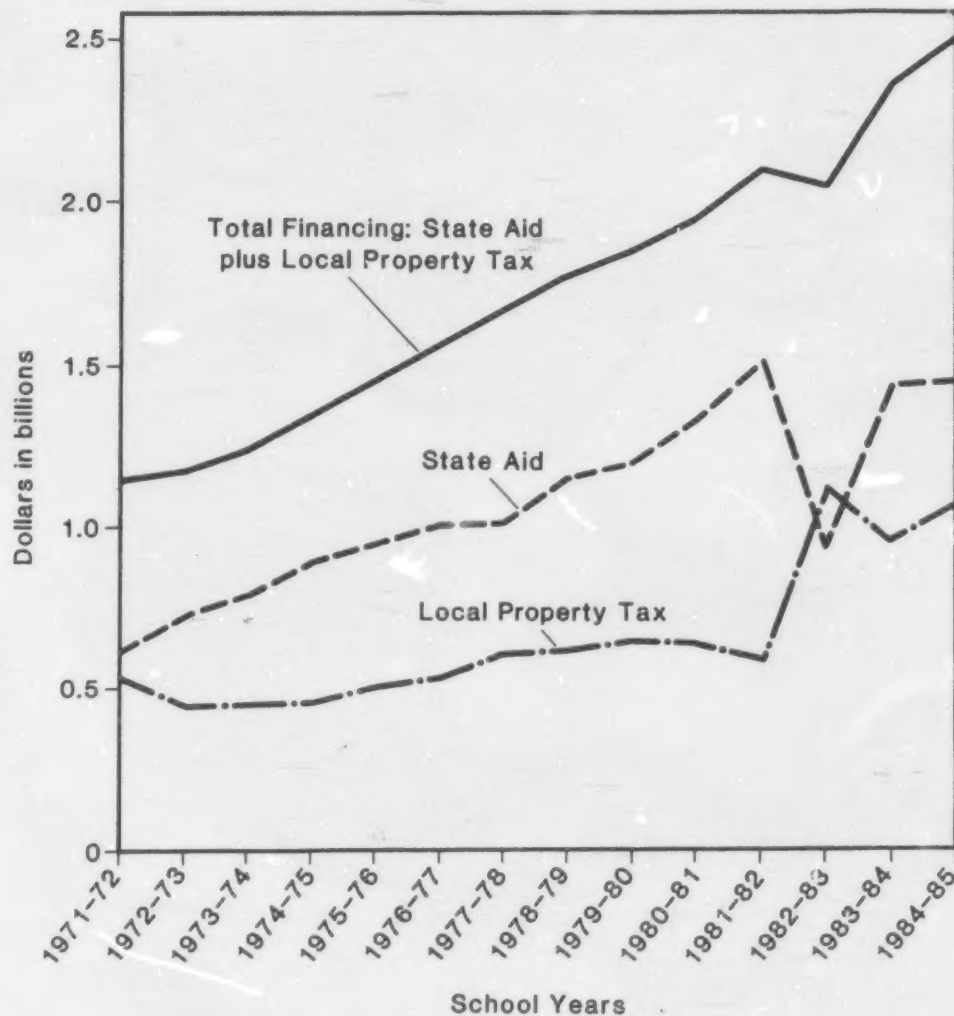
TABLE 1
ELEMENTARY - SECONDARY PERCENT STATE SUPPORT
(in millions)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>Total State Aid</u>	<u>Percent State</u>	<u>Net Levy</u>	<u>Percent Local Property Tax</u>
1971-72	\$1,144.5	\$ 620.4	54.2	524.1	45.8
1972-73	1,172.9	734.5	62.6	438.4	37.4
1973-74	1,243.9	792.8	63.7	451.1	36.3
1974-75	1,355.9	901.4	66.5	454.5	33.5
1975-76	1,457.2	948.0	65.1	509.2	34.9
1976-77	1,559.2	1,031.9	66.2	527.3	33.8
1977-78	1,677.9	1,062.1	63.3	615.8	36.7
1978-79	1,781.4	1,159.6	65.1	621.8	34.9
1979-80	1,861.2	1,206.7	64.8	654.6	35.2
1980-81	1,973.7	1,330.4	67.4	643.4	32.6
1981-82	2,110.7	1,520.9	72.1	589.9	27.9
1982-83*	2,071.6	938.7	45.3	1,132.9	54.7
1983-84	2,386.6	1,439.2	60.3	947.4	39.7
1984-85	2,526.3	1,441.6	57.1	1,084.7	42.9

*After property tax shift.

SOURCE: Joyce Krupey, Minnesota Senate Counsel and Research, 1/18/1984. Memo to: All Senators Re: Percent State Support for Education. Includes tables dated 12/30/83. Mimeo.

FIGURE 3
MINNESOTA SCHOOL FINANCE HISTORY, 1971-72 to 1984-85



SOURCE: Joyce Krupey, Minnesota Senate Counsel and Research, 1/18/1984. Memo to: All Senators Re: Percent State Support for Education. Includes tables dated 12/30/83. Mimeo.

Growth in demand for special education programs and the addition of other programmatic responsibilities also increased the costs of providing education. For example, from 1973-74 to 1982-83, during a period in which the total licensed staff dropped 13 percent, the number of special education teachers almost doubled, from 2,942 to 5,765. During the same period the number of special education administrators more than doubled. The number of secondary vocational administrators tripled between 1973-74 and 1981-82 after which the number declined substantially (Minnesota Department of Public Education 1984e, 5).

The costs of providing education may also have increased as a result of new technology and curriculum during the period. Acquisition of computers, computer software, other technology, and new educational materials have added costs to school operations.

Another possible increase in costs reflects the lower use of existing school facilities and programs caused by declining enrollments. The "underutilization" of buildings, classrooms, and other facilities and the smaller enrollments in certain programs have likely caused some inefficiencies, thereby increasing costs per pupil for specific services or in particular schools or districts.

RECENT CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER MINNESOTA PUBLIC EDUCATION

The sharp decline in public school enrollments, new fiscal constraints, and the rising costs of providing public education have had the combined effect of contracting Minnesota's public education system. This has had an impact on the system in a number of important ways.*

Minnesota's Education Expenses Expand Less Than Most States

As illustrated in Figure 3, Minnesota's public school system has enjoyed an expansion of revenues since 1971-72 with a lag in this expansion only during the years of the state's

*This analysis is based on the most recent data compiled and available in published reports. In many cases no data is currently available beyond school year 1982-83, the year best reflecting the depth of the state's recent financial crisis. Examination of unpublished data indicates that in the following year 1983-84 total K-12 expenditures increased over 1982-83 by 6.4 percent. However, using the Berman, Weiler inflation measure of 5.9 percent for that year the real increase is only .5 percent, indicating some improvement, but no significant alteration in the ten year trend. The data used for this calculation came from William Kiesow, school financial management at the Minnesota Department of Education.

fiscal crisis. After the crisis in 1983-84, the pattern of increasing revenues resumed. Has this actually been a period of expansion despite the circumstances discussed earlier? In fact, this pattern masks important forces that have diminished the significance of these and other increases during the past decade. The rise in expenditures is not as substantial as it appears at first blush. When inflation and per capita income are taken into account and the increases are compared with those of other states, a different picture emerges. While Minnesota spent more on education than the national average in absolute terms, per pupil, and as a percentage of per capita income during the decade 1972-73 to 1982-83, Minnesota's lead in all of these measures has declined significantly during the same period. Table 2 presents the changes in Minnesota's educational expenditures in these three measures compared with those of the United States and with other midwestern states.

It is true that expenditures for Minnesota's elementary and secondary schools increased 92 percent, from about \$1.2 billion to almost \$2.4 billion between 1972-73 and 1982-83. However, when measured in constant (1972) dollars,* to compensate for inflation, the 1982-83 figure becomes just over \$1.0 billion or a 16.5 percent drop in school expenditures (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, 4). This was a more substantial decline in constant dollars than that experienced by the nation as a whole (down 1.6 percent), and was a greater decline than that of all other midwestern states (see Table 2). Indeed, only seven states had a greater percentage decline in constant dollars during the period than Minnesota. These were Vermont, Delaware, District of Columbia, New York, Pennsylvania, and California (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, 4-5).

But, as pointed out earlier, Minnesota experienced a dramatic decline in student enrollment during this period. Perhaps this explains why Minnesota's expenditures in constant dollars dropped more precipitously than most other states. What happens to this picture if expenditures per pupil during the period are examined?

Indeed, Minnesota's per pupil expenditures in current dollars increased 170 percent between 1972-73 and 1982-83. In constant 1972 dollars (compensating for inflation) this increase amounted to 21.8 percent. However, all states increased their expenditures per pupil during this decade and Minnesota's increase was modest when compared to the nation as a whole, which experienced a 186 percent increase in current dollars and a 29 percent increase in constant dollars during the period (see Figure 4). This was also a smaller increase than all other midwestern states (see Table 2). Moreover, only seven states--Vermont, Illinois, Massachusetts, Virginia, Arizona, Georgia, and Utah--had smaller real increases (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, 7-8).

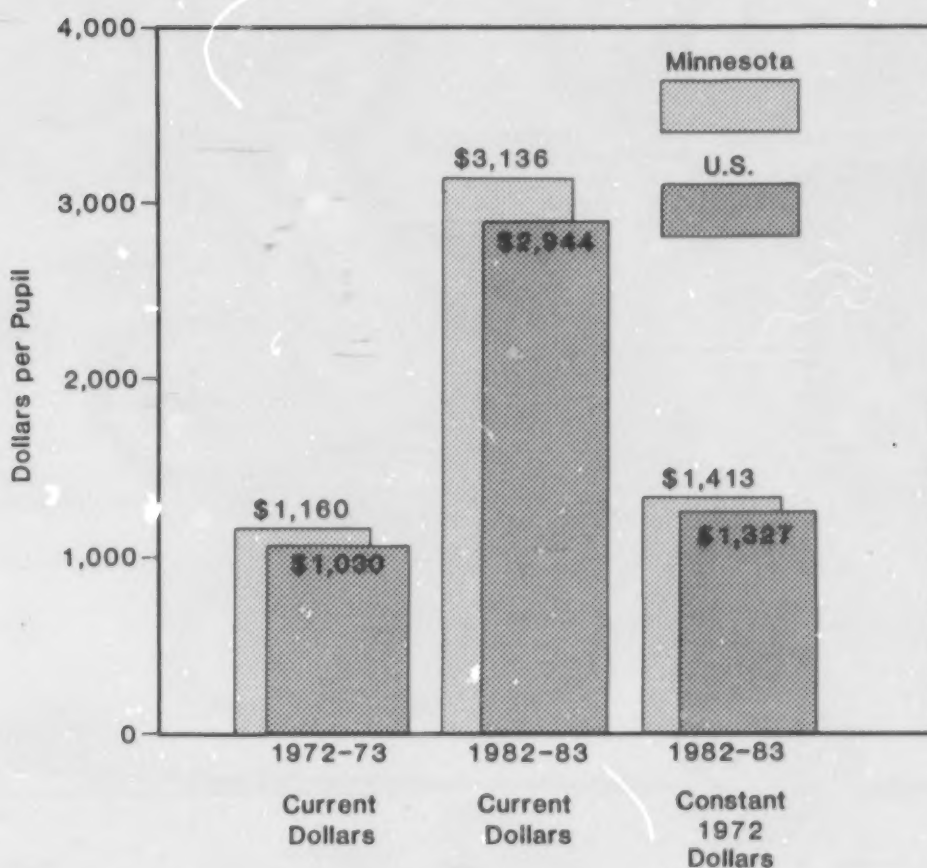
*Berman, Weiler Associates used the state and local price deflator to calculate constant 1972 dollars (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, A-24).

TABLE 2
CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES 1972-73 TO 1982-83
MINNESOTA, U.S., AND OTHER MIDWESTERN STATES

	Elementary/Secondary Expenditures in Con- stant 1972 Dollars (percent change)	Elementary/Secondary Per Pupil Expendi- tures in Constant 1972 Dollars (percent change)	Elementary/Secondary Per Pupil Expenditures as a Percentage of Per Capita Income (percent point change)
Minnesota	-16.5	21.8	3.4
Iowa	-3.3	30.6	6.4
Kansas	14.0	49.5	7.6
Nebraska	-5.7	37.3	7.6
North Dakota	25.0	61.8	9.4
South Dakota	-5.7	30.3	4.9
Wisconsin	2.0	34.3	7.4
U.S.	-1.6	28.8	3.7

Data from: Berman, Weiler Associates, An Assessment of Minnesota K-12 Education, The Costs of Public Education (Berkeley, California: Berman, Weiler Associates, June 1984), pp. 4, 5, 11.

FIGURE 4
THE EFFECT OF INFLATION ON K-12 SCHOOL EXPENDITURES,
MINNESOTA COMPARED WITH U.S. AVERAGE



Data from: Berman, Weiler Associates, An Assessment of Minnesota K-12 Education, The Costs of Public Education (Berkeley, California: Berman, Weiler Associates, June 1984), pp. 7, 8.

Perhaps Minnesota's increases have been less than other states' over the decade because Minnesota has relatively less income wealth on which to draw for tax support. What does this picture look like if we account for per capita income among the states?

In fact, the picture remains largely the same when the state's income wealth is taken into account. Minnesota's per capita income remained above the national average during the decade. Its per pupil expenditures as a percentage of per capita income increased, along with all other states, between 1972-73 and 1982-83. However, Minnesota's increase was modest relative to the increases in the nation as a whole (see Table 2). In fact, Minnesota's increase of 3.4 percentage points was slightly less than the national average of 3.7 percentage points and was a smaller increase than all other midwestern states. Only twelve states increased their expenditures per pupil relative to per capita income less than did Minnesota. They were Vermont, Mississippi, District of Columbia, Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Georgia, Massachusetts, Utah, Tennessee, Texas and California (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, 11).

All of these changes are reflected in comparisons of Minnesota's ranking among all the states on education expenditures between 1972 and 1983 (see Table 3). Clearly, Minnesota's high spending status has slipped, especially when per capita income is considered.

Expenditures for elementary and secondary education have also become a substantially smaller portion of the state budget. Table 4 illustrates this trend and indicates the shifting priorities among state appropriations. In the 1971-73 biennium, funding for elementary and secondary education comprised over 40 percent of the state's appropriations. Its portion declined steadily over the following decade so that in the 1983-85 biennium, elementary and secondary education represented a little over 27 percent of the budget. While elementary and secondary education remains the single largest expenditure for state government, it has lost ground to property tax relief and aids to other local jurisdictions and to welfare, corrections, and health.

TABLE 3
MINNESOTA'S RANKING WHEN COMPARED WITH OTHER
STATES ON EDUCATION EXPENDITURES
1972 and 1982

	Ranking	
	1972	1982
Elementary/secondary public school expenditures	12	16
Expenditures per pupil for K-12 schools	11	16
Elementary/secondary expenditures as a percentage of personal income	4	15
Per pupil expenditures as a percentage of per capita income	6	18

Data from: C. Emily Feistritzer, The Condition of Teaching: A State by State Analysis, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 54; Berman, Weiler Associates, An Assessment of Minnesota K-12 Education, the Costs of Public Education (Berkeley, California: Berman, Weiler Associates, June 1984), pp. 4-6, 10.

TABLE 4
MINNESOTA STATE APPROPRIATIONS, 1971-73 THROUGH 1983-85

(All amounts are in thousands of dollars. Figures in parentheses are percentages of total appropriations.)

Function	1971-73	1973-75	1975-77	1977-79	1979-81	1981-83	1983-85
Public elementary-secondary education**	\$1,365,997 (40.1%)	\$1,559,962 (36.7%)	\$2,006,461 (33.9%)	\$2,248,774 (31.1%)	\$2,605,163 (29.7%)	\$2,522,241 (27.4%)	\$2,911,974 (27.4%)
Higher education	340,844 (10.0%)	388,764 (9.1%)	527,380 (8.9%)	670,777 (9.3%)	768,999 (8.8%)	*	*
Other education	49,942 (1.5%)	122,448 (2.9%)	186,946 (3.2%)	193,541 (2.7%)	221,917 (2.5%)	*	*
Property tax relief and aids to local government***	453,402 (13.3%)	617,310 (14.5%)	884,391 (15.0%)	1,220,691 (16.9%)	1,543,667 (17.6%)	*	*
Welfare, corrections, and health	359,242 (10.6%)	453,240 (10.7%)	699,922 (11.8%)	1,053,085 (14.6%)	1,334,569 (15.2%)	*	*
Highways and mass transit	341,631 (10.0%)	467,156 (11.0%)	611,865 (10.3%)	651,447 (9.0%)	701,298 (8.0%)	*	*
Other executive branch	236,635 (7.0%)	252,949 (6.0%)	430,353 (7.3%)	553,796 (7.7%)	618,621 (7.0%)	*	*
Other state government	255,182 (7.5%)	387,547 (9.1%)	566,100 (9.6%)	629,351 (8.7%)	988,193 (11.3%)	*	*
Total direct and open appropriations	\$3,402,875	\$4,249,376	\$5,913,418	\$7,221,462	\$8,782,427	\$9,210,573	\$10,612,291

* Data was not readily available for individual budget functions for the 1981-83 and 1983-85 bienniums.

** Includes tax relief aids which are allocated to school districts.

*** Excludes tax relief aids which are allocated to school districts.

Reprinted with permission from: Berman, Weiler Associates, An Assessment of Minnesota K-12 Education, The Costs of Public Education (Berkeley, California: Berman, Weiler Associates, June 1984), p. A-20.

School Workforce Declines

An important consequence of the contracting forces is the sharp decline in the size of the workforce of the public schools. Table 5 indicates the number of FTE (full-time equivalents) licensed elementary-secondary staff from 1973-74 through 1982-83, by assignment. In almost all assignment categories there has been a significant decline in the numbers of FTE staff over the decade. The exceptions are special education teachers and administrators, secondary vocational administrators, and middle school teachers (which may reflect a reshuffling of the teaching force rather than an actual increase in teachers in the system). Figure 5 illustrates the decline in total licensed staff, all teachers, and all teachers excluding special education teachers. These trends suggest two conclusions. First, the number of all licensed staff and all teachers appears relatively stable prior to 1980-81, despite the dramatic enrollment decline of the period. But when special education teachers are excluded from the trend line, the drop in teaching staff more closely parallels the decline in public school enrollments during the period. Second, the most significant drop begins after school year 1980-81 and is especially dramatic the following year. In fact, roughly half of the decade's net loss of regular teachers appears to have been related to the state's fiscal crisis. Even those staff categories which increased during the overall decade dropped between 1980-81 and 1982-83 (Minnesota Department of Education 1984e, 5).

A recent study for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, using a slightly different set of years--1972-73 to 1982-83, indicates that during that decade, Minnesota lost just over one-tenth of its classroom teachers. Only five states--the District of Columbia, Michigan, Delaware, New York and Maryland--lost a greater portion of their teachers during the period (Feistritzer 1983, 32).

TABLE 5

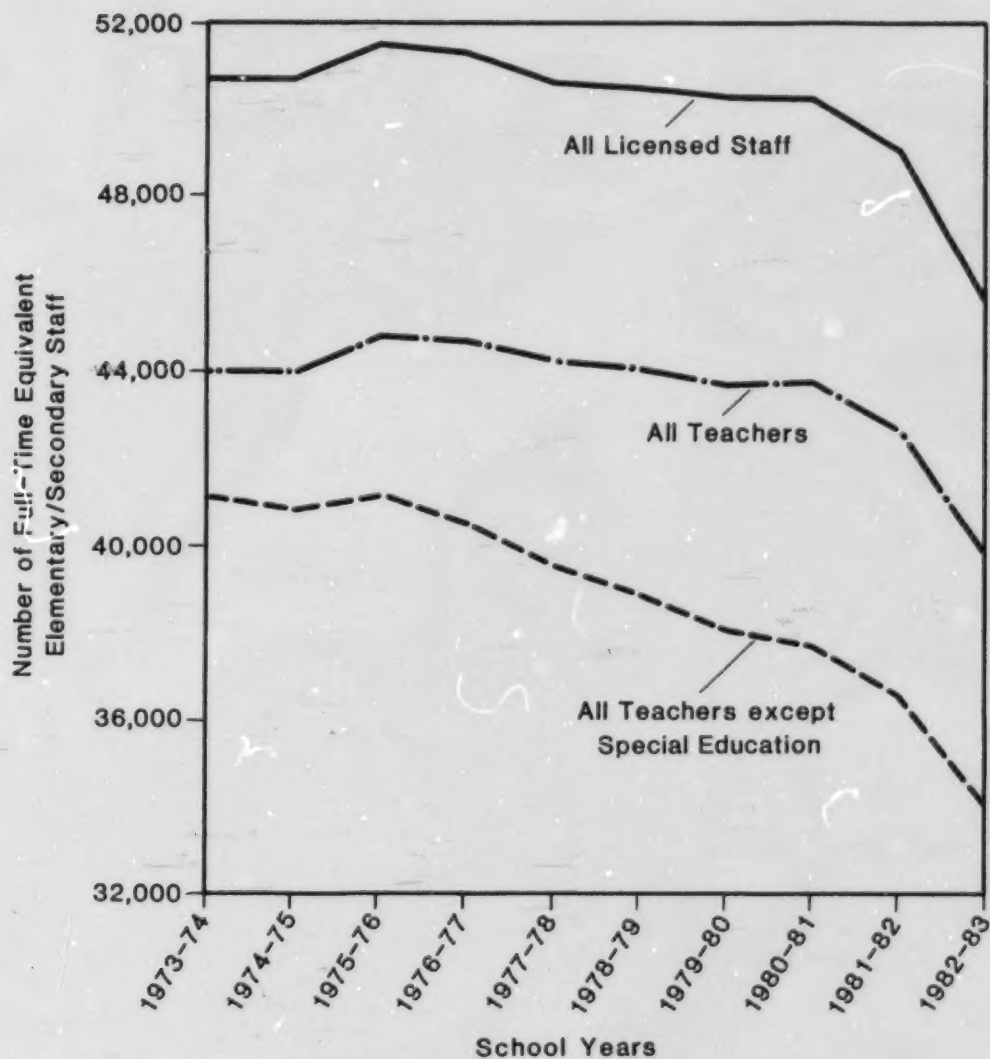
**MINNESOTA LICENSED FTE* ELEMENTARY-SECONDARY STAFF
1973-74 THROUGH 1982-83, BY ASSIGNMENT**

Assignment	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, AND ASSISTANTS										
Superintendent	430	415	414	422	416	414	404	398	386	396
Assistant Superintendent	74	80	70	71	67	69	70	63	60	55
Principal	1,484	1,470	1,476	1,447	1,429	1,401	1,405	1,416	1,386	1,302
Assistant Principal	346	340	353	357	345	328	337	325	319	292
TOTAL	2,334	2,305	2,313	2,297	2,257	2,212	2,216	2,202	2,151	2,045
OTHER ADMINISTRATORS										
Special Education Admin.	79	92	120	140	149	162	168	178	190	171
Secondary Vocational Admin.	44	56	76	78	68	65	50	88	122	67
Other Administrators	996	997	1,025	955	925	985	1,000	989	957	776
TOTAL	1,119	1,145	1,221	1,173	1,142	1,212	1,218	1,255	1,269	1,014
SUPPORT STAFF										
Counselors	1,027	1,044	1,062	1,019	1,018	1,020	1,022	1,021	996	869
Librarians/Media Gen.	1,182	1,185	1,162	1,155	1,113	1,111	1,094	1,073	1,034	920
Other Support Staff	1,137	1,040	956	985	925	986	1,063	1,046	1,024	941
TOTAL	3,346	3,269	3,180	3,159	3,056	3,117	3,179	3,140	3,054	2,730
TEACHERS										
Prekindergarten	18	19	31	26	48	80	50	54	35	31
Kindergarten	1,322	1,327	1,334	1,268	1,169	1,140	1,128	1,148	1,133	1,134
Elementary	17,476	17,144	16,995	16,555	16,347	16,077	16,039	15,880	15,356	14,168
Middle School	541	564	1,047	1,027	1,047	1,278	1,474	1,413	1,701	1,618
Secondary	21,662	21,767	21,739	21,605	20,920	20,299	19,385	19,181	18,321	17,019
Special Education	2,942	3,201	3,668	4,236	4,647	5,160	5,584	6,055	6,100	5,765
TOTAL	43,961	44,022	44,814	44,717	44,178	44,034	43,660	43,731	42,646	39,735
TOTAL (excluding spec ed)	41,019	40,821	41,146	40,481	39,531	38,874	38,076	37,676	36,546	33,970
TOTAL STAFF	50,760	50,741	51,528	51,346	50,633	50,575	50,273	50,328	49,120	45,524

*Full-time equivalents

Reprinted from Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 4.

FIGURE 5
DECLINE IN MINNESOTA PUBLIC EDUCATION WORKFORCE,
1973-74 THROUGH 1982-83



Data from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 4.

Staff Ages, Has More Training and Experience, Increasing Costs to the System

It is not surprising that in a labor-intensive operation like schools, contraction would require significant reduction of staff. But with tenure and seniority protections in place, the reductions have resulted in the hiring of fewer new teachers and the layoff of these teachers first. In addition, fewer retirement-created openings have been filled. The result has been a significant increase in the age of Minnesota's public school staff, as indicated in Table 6. In 1973-74 almost half of all licensed staff were age 20 to 35. Ten years later just over one-fourth were under 35. The change is even more substantial for the staff under age 30. In 1973-74, 32 percent of the staff were under 30. In 1982-83 only 10 percent were of that age, a 71 percent drop (Minnesota Department of Education 1984e, 12). While there has been a corresponding increase in the number of staff over 35--from 51 percent in 1973-74 to 73 percent in 1982-83--the number of staff over age 54 has increased only slightly during the period (Minnesota Department of Education 1984e, 12). The median age of staff has increased from 35.4 in 1973-74 to 41.5 in 1982-83 (Minnesota Department of Education 1984e, 12).

Over the past decade the public school staff has also become more highly trained as those remaining in the system obtained additional education for certification renewal and salary increases. This is reflected in the increasing numbers and percentages of staff holding masters, specialist, and doctorate degrees. Table 7 indicates these changes between school years 1973-74 and 1982-83. In 1973-74, one-fourth of the licensed staff held degrees higher than a bachelors degree. A decade later, in 1982-83, one-third held higher degrees. Of that portion of the staff who are teachers, 19 percent held higher degrees in 1973-74. Ten years later 27 percent of the teachers held such degrees.

With fewer new teachers entering and remaining in the education system, the years of experience of Minnesota public school staff have also increased. Table 8 shows these changes between school years 1973-74 and 1982-83. In 1973-74, 53 percent of the licensed staff had ten or fewer years of experience while only 20 percent had over twenty years of experience. A decade later the percentage of those with ten or fewer years of experience dropped to 39 percent while those with over twenty years of experience grew to 35 percent. The pattern is similar for teachers. In 1973-74 well over half of the teaching force had ten or fewer years of experience. A decade later that group had shrunk to one-third of the total while those with over twenty years of experience grew from 17 percent to 26 percent.

This trend toward an older, more experienced and educated staff has important financial implications for Minnesota's public education system. These teachers, and other school personnel, are entitled to higher salaries that have, in turn, increased the costs of operating the system.

TABLE 6
AGE OF MINNESOTA PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF,
1973-74 and 1982-83

Age	1973-74		1982-83	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL LICENSED STAFF				
20-34	24,931	49	12,134	27
35-44	11,823	23	16,456	36
over 44	14,004	28	16,934	37
TEACHERS				
20-34	23,397	53	11,564	29
35-44	9,551	22	14,555	37
over 44	11,012	25	13,616	34
SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, OTHER ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF				
20-34	1,534	23	569	10
35-44	2,273	33	1,901	33
over 44	2,993	44	3,319	57

Data from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), pp. 12, 13.

TABLE 7
TRAINING OF MINNESOTA PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF,
1973-74 AND 1982-83

Training	1973-74		1982-83	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL LICENSED STAFF				
B.A. or less	37,973	74.8	30,474	66.9
Masters	12,198	24.0	13,774	30.3
Specialist	291	0.6	819	1.7
Doctorate	297	0.6	457	1.0
TOTAL	50,759		45,524	
TEACHERS				
B.A. or less	35,700	81.2	28,993	73.0
Masters	8,157	18.6	10,503	26.4
Specialist	58	0.1	157	0.4
Doctorate	45	0.1	81	0.2
TOTAL	43,960		39,734	
SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, OTHER ADMINISTRATORS, AND SUPPORT STAFF				
B.A. or less	2,247	33.1	1,480	25.6
Masters	4,041	59.7	3,271	56.5
Specialist	233	3.4	662	11.4
Doctorate	252	3.7	376	6.5
TOTAL	6,773		5,789	

Data from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 16.

TABLE 8
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FOR MINNESOTA PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF,
1973-74 AND 1982-83

Years of Experience	1973-74		1982-83	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL LICENSED STAFF				
0-10	26,727	52.7	14,355	38.6
11-19	14,157	27.9	9,875	26.6
over 20	<u>9,875</u>	19.5	<u>12,927</u>	34.8
TOTAL	50,759		37,157	
TEACHERS				
0-10	24,803	56.4	13,407	33.7
11-19	11,730	26.7	16,119	40.6
over 20	<u>7,427</u>	16.9	<u>10,209</u>	25.7
TOTAL	43,960		39,735	
SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, OTHER ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF				
0-10	1,924	28.3	948	16.4
11-19	<u>2,427</u>	35.7	2,125	36.7
over 20	<u>2,449</u>	36.0	<u>2,717</u>	46.9
TOTAL	6,800		5,790	

Data from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 18.

Teachers' Salaries Lose Ground to Inflation

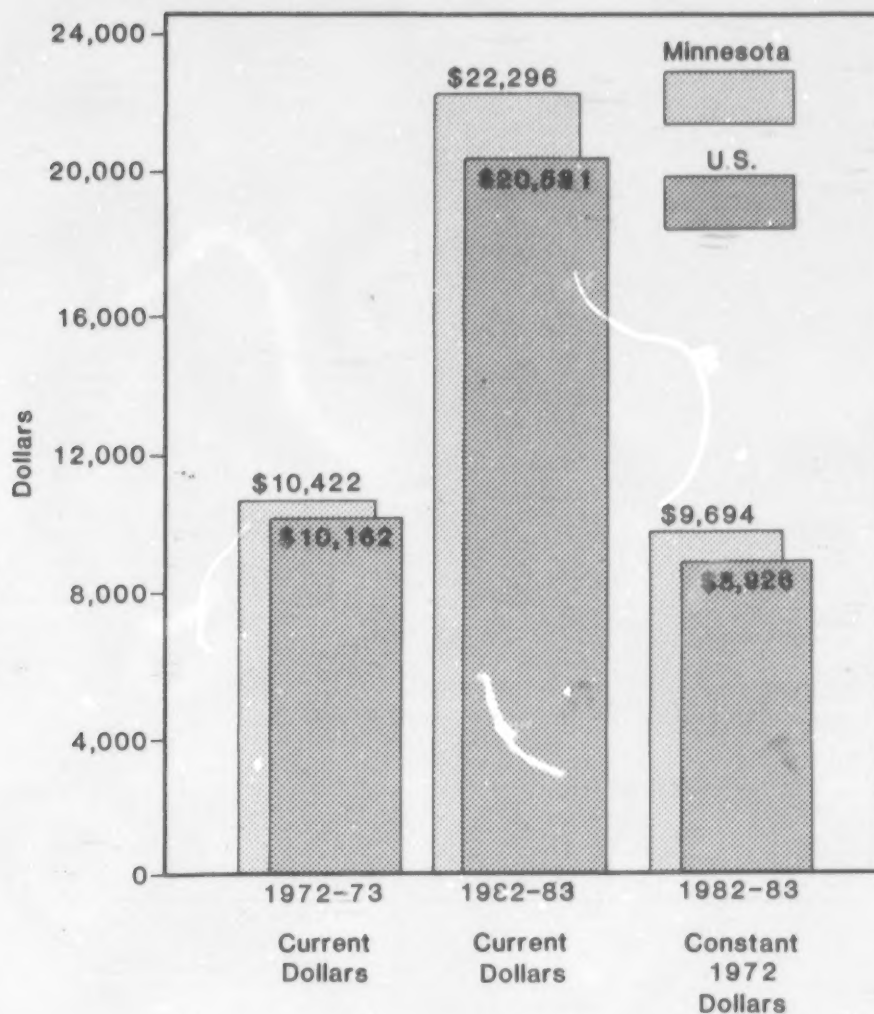
Between 1973-74 and 1982-83 the average salaries of Minnesota's teachers rose 114 percent (See Appendix B). To examine this increase in the context of inflation and the increases experienced by other states a recent national study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (authored by C. Emily Feistritzer) is used. That study compares teacher salaries for a slightly different period, 1972-73 to 1982-83. During that time, Minnesota's average teacher salary rose from \$10,422 to \$22,296, an increase of \$11,874 or 114 percent. The comparable national figures were \$10,164 in 1972-73 and \$20,531, an increase of \$10,367 or 102 percent (Feistritzer 1983, 47). Thus, Minnesota's average salary increased somewhat more than the national average and Minnesota's ranking in average teacher salary rose slightly from 14 to 13 (Feistritzer 1983, 47).

However, inflation during the period reduced the significance of the increase. In constant (1972) dollars the 1982-83 average salary for a Minnesota teacher was \$9,694 representing a decline from the average salary of \$10,422 in 1972-73. In effect, Minnesota teachers lost 7 percent of their purchasing power during that decade, despite the increase in current dollars. The comparable loss in purchasing power for the national average was 12 percent (Feistritzer 1983, 47). Figure 6 illustrates these effects of inflation. The loss in purchasing power is even more significant given that the teaching cadre in 1982-83 was more experienced and better educated than it was in 1972-73.

Teachers' salaries did not keep up with inflation, but how did they stand relative to the total personal income of the state, as a measure of its ability to increase those salaries? In Minnesota the total spent on teachers' salaries in 1982 was 2 percent of the state's personal income. This reflects a drop of almost one-third, from 2.8 percent in 1972. The nation's drop between 1972 and 1982 was even greater (Feistritzer 1983, 53). Therefore, the rise in Minnesota teacher salaries was not sufficient to even maintain stable purchasing power and was less than the general increase in personal income during the period.

In addition, despite the increase in current dollars, teachers' salaries constituted virtually the same percentage of total elementary and secondary school expenditures in 1982 as in 1972-73, about 38.5 percent (Berman, Weiler Associates 1984d, A-82, A-83).

FIGURE 6
THE EFFECT OF INFLATION ON TEACHER SALARIES,
MINNESOTA COMPARED WITH U.S. AVERAGE



Data from: C. Emily Feistritz, The Condition of Teaching: A State by State Analysis, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 47.

Local Fund Balances Drop Precipitously

During the 1970s most school districts built up significant operating fund balances serving as local reserves on which they drew interest payments and saved for future contingencies. In the three years of greatest growth, 1977-78 to 1979-80, this amounted to an additional \$151 per pupil unit as a statewide average. But the combined pressures of declining enrollments, new fiscal constraints, and increasing costs of providing education reversed this trend, beginning in school year 1980-81. By 1982-83 half of the districts had fund balances which declined by at least \$5 per pupil unit. The trend is illustrated in Table 9. There is evidence suggesting that the condition of local fund balances began improving in school year 1983-84. This apparently reflects increased stability in local finances as the state-local revenue picture began improving after the fiscal crisis (Krupey 1985).

TABLE 9
CHANGES IN STATE AVERAGE OF OPERATING FUNDS BALANCE,
PER PUPIL UNIT, 1976-77 TO 1982-83

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Changes in Funds Balance Per Pupil Unit</u>
1976-77	+ \$3
1977-78	+ 47
1978-79	+ 50
1979-80	+ 54
1980-81	- 8
1981-82	- 27
1982-83	- 13

Reprinted from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, School District Profiles 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, August 1984), p. 9.

Schools Close and Districts Consolidate and Pair

Other symptoms of the contraction of Minnesota's public education system are the closing of school buildings and the pairing and consolidation of districts during the 1970s and early 1980s. Prior to school year 1971-72, the decline in the number of schools was not caused by contraction but was the direct result of the closing of one and two room ungraded rural elementary schools and the corresponding establishment of additional graded elementary schools. However, between 1971-72, when Minnesota's enrollments peaked, and 1982-83 school closings reflected a decline in student enrollments. During this period, enrollments dropped about 20 percent and the number of schools declined by 18 percent (Minnesota Department of Education 1982d, 1-3). But in 1982-83, an unusually large number of closings occurred, more than three times the number during any of the preceding years since 1971-72. Districts were forced to close 102 schools as part of their local retrenchment to cope with state aid reductions caused by the state's financial crisis (Minnesota Department of Education 1982d, 1, 5-6). Table 10 reviews the history of school closings from school years 1960-61 to 1983-84.

In addition to closing school buildings, eight school districts have consolidated into four since 1977 and two more will merge in 1985. Twenty other districts have established pairing agreements since 1977, enabling these districts to provide programs jointly without consolidation (Hokenson 1984).

TABLE 10
NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPERATING IN MINNESOTA,
1960-61 THROUGH 1983-84

School Year	Graded Elementary Schools	Ungraded Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	Secondary Schools	Total, All Public Schools
1960-61	923	1,580		562	3,065
1961-62	951	1,466		572	2,989
1962-63	976	1,351		582	2,909
1963-64	987	1,227		589	2,803
1964-65	1,000	1,141		599	2,740
1965-66	1,042	1,070		609	2,721
1966-67	1,018	920		613	2,551
1967-68	1,037	782		619	2,438
1968-69	1,040	666		628	2,334
1969-70	1,128	487		629	2,244
1970-71	1,187	295		639	2,121
1971-72	1,179		11	639	1,829
1972-73	1,162		18	635	1,815
1973-74	1,160		23	632	1,815
1974-75	1,120		32	624	1,776
1975-76	1,090		38	622	1,750
1976-77	1,064		38	621	1,723
1977-78	1,034		39	618	1,691
1978-79	1,010		46	610	1,666
1979-80	991		47	604	1,642
1980-81	984		50	597	1,631
1981-82	969		55	582	1,606
1982-83	889		52	563	1,504
1983-84	889		54	557	1,500

Data from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, School Closings: Trends and Prospects (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, October 1982), p. 1 and Sharon Peck (Minnesota Department of Education) conversation with Thomas Peek (CURA), October 26, 1984.

DESPITE CONTRACTION, MINNESOTA SCHOOLS TAKE ON ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

While Minnesota's public education system experienced contraction during the 1970s and early 1980s, this was also a period when public schools were asked to take on additional responsibilities. The last great reform movement in public education occurred during the late 1960s and early 1970s. While it had several dimensions, a major emphasis was an effort to improve access to public education for children to whom it had been limited because of racial segregation; sex discrimination; physical, mental, or emotional handicap; or because of financial disparities among school districts. A wide range of actions occurred in an attempt to address these access concerns, including those promulgated by the federal and state governments and United States and state courts. In response to other pressures, Minnesota schools expanded the age group they served by expanding community education programs, early childhood and family education programs, as well as establishing programs for the gifted.

Schools Required to Foster Racial Integration

Though it was more than a decade since the United States Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of public schools in its 1954 decision, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, school districts in Minnesota and throughout the nation were still struggling to accomplish the task in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In Minnesota, this primarily affected the large urban school districts of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth as well as a few rural schools with American Indian populations. Desegregation plans were drafted, revised, and implemented throughout the period and into the 1980s. The schools were forced to confront social, political, and administrative barriers in order to achieve racial balance among students within individual schools.

At the same time there was an effort to recruit racial minorities into teaching, school administration, and other school staff positions. There were changes in curriculum so that the history and culture of racial minorities would be reflected in textbooks, lesson plans, and school activities. Later, public schools were also required to provide bilingual education for those speaking English as a second language.

The public schools were assigned a major responsibility for fostering racial integration in American society and became an important public instrument for accomplishing that task. Thus, while these efforts were, in part, designed to improve access of racial minorities to the academic programs provided by public education, the schools were also being asked to take on a major social responsibility as well.

Schools Required to Eliminate Sex Discrimination

Concern about sex equity in education was a major aspect of the women's movement, whose social and political importance was growing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In response to this concern, Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibiting discrimination on account of sex in most federally-assisted educational programs. Numerous complaints were brought against K-12 public schools in Minnesota and elsewhere in the nation to enforce the legislation. The major targets of these complaints were discrimination in the hiring and promotion of women for administrative positions and equal provision of programs for girls' athletics. Beyond this, efforts were made to eliminate sex bias in curriculum including textbooks, lesson plans, and school activities. In 1977, the Minnesota Department of Education issued to small and medium-sized school districts a model plan for eliminating sex bias in their programs, while the larger districts developed their own plans (National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year 1978, 34-37 and Mary Peek 1984).

Through state efforts and lawsuits, Minnesota schools were being asked to eliminate their own discriminatory practices as well as play a major role in the long-term amelioration of sex discrimination in the society.

Schools Required to Improve Access for the Handicapped

While Minnesota schools have, for some time, provided specialized services for handicapped children, special education programs grew substantially during the 1970s. This growth resulted from new statutes, court decisions, rules and regulations, and changing attitudes about educating handicapped children. In Minnesota, the definition of handicapped children was expanded in the late 1960s and early 1970s to include "trainable mentally retarded" children and those with "learning and behavioral problems." This, in turn, broadened the special education skills taught and made special education available to a great many students not previously covered by the programs. A series of court decisions in the early 1970s, as well as political pressure, resulted in the congressional passage in 1975 of Public Law 94-142 and similar state legislation a year later. These laws, taking effect in school year 1976-77, have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of handicapped students served and the types of services offered in Minnesota public schools (Sutter 1983, 32-35).

The percentage of children identified as special education students and the number of special education teachers in Minnesota's public education system has swelled since 1976-77 (Table 11). These changes have had a substantial effect on the finances of Minnesota public education. Almost all of the funding for special education programs comes from state and local sources (Alter, Jacobson, and Vos 1984, 14-19). But the changes also reflect a significant expansion of services provided by the public schools.

TABLE 11
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND STAFF,
1976-77 THROUGH 1983-84

Year	Special Education Child Count ¹	Percentage of K-12 Public Enrollment	Special Education Teachers	Percentage of Total Staff
1976-77	851,000	8.26	4,236	9.5
1977-78	832,000	8.76	4,647	10.5
1978-79	803,000	9.71	5,160	11.7
1979-80	774,996	10.51	5,584	12.8
1980-81	751,008	10.65	6,055	13.8
1981-82	730,860	10.57	6,100	14.3
1982-83	714,657	10.77	5,765	14.5
1983-84	703,973	11.12	N.A.	N.A.

¹Unduplicated child count, includes children ages 3-21 served in Minnesota under P.L. 94-142; since some children receive more than one special education service, the unduplicated count can underestimate the number of children receiving a particular service.

Data from: Alter, Joel, Dan Jacobson, and Jo Vos, Evaluation of Special Education (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Office of the Legislative Auditor, March 26, 1984), p. 30; Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83 (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, May 1984), p. 4.

Public Education Finance Reformed in Attempt to Minimize Fiscal Disparities

Increases in pupil enrollments in the 1960s and inflation in the costs of providing education placed increasing pressures on local property tax levies which in the early 1970s paid a little under half of the costs of Minnesota school districts. Pressure on the property tax from school districts, as well as counties, cities, and other local jurisdictions, increased such that by 1970 public concern about the problem had taken the political form of a "tax revolt." At the same time some state and local officials, as well as some citizens, had grown concerned about wide differences among school districts in per pupil expenditures and local property tax rates. In 1971, a constitutional court challenge of Minnesota's school finance system, Van Dusartz v. Priest, reinforced the belief that reliance on local property wealth for funding public schools was creating unequal educational opportunities for children in Minnesota (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 34-35).

As a result of these concerns, reform of Minnesota's school finance system, along with property tax relief, became a major issue in the 1970 gubernatorial election. After the election, Governor Wendell Anderson's administration initiated major reform that significantly shifted responsibility and authority for funding education from local school districts and their property tax bases to the state and its more progressive tax sources. The reform called for increasing the state's contribution to district revenue by substantially raising the foundation aid level and placing a limitation on the taxes which a district could raise against real property. Additional property tax relief, on top of that which had been established earlier, was also provided (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 35).

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the legislature modified the finance system in ways which again increased reliance on local property taxes as well as increasing expenditure and tax rate disparities. These changes were particularly significant as the state modified school finance to cope with its financial crisis (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 35-46). The implications of the changes are discussed in Chapter IV. Nonetheless, Minnesota's public school districts remained part of a complex web of aid formulas, levy limitations, and property tax relief programs which attempted to serve a variety of goals including those related to tax equity and revenue and expenditure equalization. Thus, while the effort to improve access to public education by minimizing fiscal disparities was of limited success, it added another responsibility to Minnesota's public education system--to try to provide its services in an equitable manner with an equitable tax burden throughout the state.

Schools Broaden the Age Group They Serve

Beyond the efforts to improve access to public education, Minnesota schools also broadened the age group served by the K-12 public education system, through the creation and expansion of community education and the establishment of early childhood and family education programs. These developments represent an expansion of the role of public education from serving people ages five to eighteen only to serving people both younger and older than that age group. This reflects a growing Minnesota interest in the idea of life-long learning (Fish 1984).

The first of these developments was the establishment of community education programs. Interest in using Minnesota public schools after hours for various community education activities developed in the 1960s. During the mid-to-late 1960s, a few rural and metropolitan communities opened their gyms for community sports and recreation, their auditoriums for community productions, and their classrooms for enrichment courses. Minneapolis established the first community education services department in Minnesota and several suburban schools and one rural school initiated community school programs (Stanley 1980, 2-3).

In 1971 the legislature passed the Community School bill under which up to sixty-seven school districts were eligible for reimbursement of \$5,000 each to offset part of the salary of a local community education director, distributed according to a formula recognizing varying district sizes. A Community Education Section was created within the Minnesota Department of Education (the first such section in the United States) and the position of State Director of Community Education was established (the second such director in the United States). At that time, only three other states had passed community education legislation. By 1972, fifty-eight Minnesota school districts were receiving the reimbursement (Stanley 1980, 3-5).

In 1973 the legislature authorized a local levy of \$1.00 per school district resident for the programs and in 1975 it increased state support by providing a 50 percent per capita state aid match to any school that levied at least \$1.00 per capita for community education. During the 1973-75 period graduate programs in community education were established at the University of Minnesota and several state universities. By 1976, more than half of Minnesota's school districts provided community education and by the end of the decade, 319 of the 435 districts operated such programs (Stanley 1980, 5-6).

During the late 1970s community education programs expanded their scope beyond recreational and enrichment activities. Older adults were provided with special classes, recreational programs, meal programs, support groups, health screening, and transportation programs. Outreach and recruitment programs were established to

encourage participation in literacy programs, including classes in General Educational Development (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and English as a Second Language (ESL). Some programs and activities were established for the handicapped and some districts provided classes on parenting, single-parenting, and inter-generational communication (Stanley 1980, 7-8).

After enjoying further expansion of state aid, community education, like other state educational programs was affected in the early 1980s by the state's fiscal crisis. During the crisis there was some reduction in state aid in direct proportion to other state aid reductions. While it varied from district to district, some community education programs picked up local programs that had previously been a part of the districts' regular curriculum. These included junior high intramural and athletic programs and driver's education. In addition, community education programs were increasingly required to reimburse districts for a portion of facility costs, such as for energy use, and some equipment, textbook, and other supply costs. Some of the aid cuts may have been recouped by legislative action which provided state equalized aid to districts for community education. Even so, community education continued to be funded primarily from local property taxes, tuition, and other fees (Carlson 1984 and Krupey 1985).

The 1970s and early 1980s has been a period of increasing interest in educational programs aimed at very young children and their parents. This interest reflects dramatic changes in family demographics including the growth of families where both parents work (now a majority of Minnesota families), and the increase in the number of single parent families, teen parent families, and mixed families resulting from remarriage. This interest has been heightened by research indicating that good parenting and early childhood education can prevent problems in later childhood (Minnesota Council on Quality Education 1984, pp. 4, 7).

In 1974 the Minnesota legislature responded by designating the Council on Quality Education to administer early childhood and family education grants to school districts for experimentation with the idea. In addition, the State Advisory Task Force on Early Childhood and Family Education was formed. Between school years 1974-75 and 1980-81 pilot projects increased from six to thirty-six while funding grew from \$230,000 to \$1.8 million. These locally developed projects were designed to provide support and assistance to parents of children aged birth to pre-kindergarten. Programs included center-based and home-based parent and family education on child development and alternative child-rearing styles, center-based child development activities, early health screening, resource libraries, and pre-parenting education for adolescents. By the end of the 1970s, Minnesota was looked to as the national leader in state efforts for early childhood and family

education. After a period of cutbacks during the recession in the early 1980s, the 1983 legislature expanded the programs by appropriating state aid of \$.25 per capita for fiscal year 1984 and \$.50 per capita for fiscal year 1985, and by providing an equalized aid and levy beginning in 1986. This indicated a further and more permanent commitment to early childhood and family education in Minnesota (Minnesota Council on Quality Education 1984, 1-20 and Krupey 1985).

Schools Asked to Provide Special Programs for Gifted Children

During the 1970s there was much discussion of the special needs of gifted and talented children, estimated to be 3 to 5 percent of the school age youngsters in the United States. These are children who have exceptional potential in general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual or performing arts, or psychomotor activity (Minnesota Department of Education 1983f, 1).

In 1979 the Minnesota legislature, in response to this concern, appropriated funds to assist school districts in developing programs to meet the needs of the gifted. Building from existing programs in 141 school districts, the state action resulted in 399 school districts offering programs serving 52,500 gifted students. Programs for the gifted are pursued by school districts through honors programs, independent study, mentorship, sections for the gifted within grade levels, cluster classes, trained volunteer tutors, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms, and enriched classes (Minnesota Gifted Awareness Program 1982). While funding for the program may be small relative to other aspects of public education, the establishment of the state program reflects again the expansion of public school responsibilities that has occurred during the past decade.

IV. THE 1980s AND BEYOND: NEW CHALLENGES FOR MINNESOTA SCHOOLS

Doing more with less was the real challenge for Minnesota public education during the 1970s and early 1980s. However, as the 1980s proceed and the schools look to the future, several crucial new challenges have begun to emerge. Like the changes faced by the schools in the preceding decade, these new challenges also reflect social, demographic political, and economic forces beyond the control of the schools.

MINNESOTA STUDENTS HAVE CHANGED

Perhaps the most important challenge to public education is to find ways to cope with a student population whose circumstances of life are dramatically different from those of their parents or possibly even their older siblings. The new student is a reflection of a changed culture, one in which, among other things, family arrangements have changed, exposure to alcohol and drugs is common, sex is experienced at a younger age, television has replaced print as the most important form of communication, and jobs have become common for students.

These new circumstances are discussed here. When Minnesota data are available to indicate the changes or identify the current situation they have been included. When they are not available, national data are used.

Minnesota Children Live in Families That Have Changed Dramatically

More and more Minnesota children live in families that are not what is thought of as the traditional, stable two-parent family. Between 1970 and 1980 a wide range of changes occurred in Minnesota families which have significantly affected school-age children.

Among the changes was the growth in the number of families in which both parents work. In 57 percent of Minnesota's married-couple families both husband and wife are now employed. During the 1970s Minnesota women continued to enter the labor force, including married women with children under eighteen. Forty percent of married women with children worked in 1970. Ten years later the numbers had risen to 58 percent (Commission on the Economic Status of Women 1984, 15-16). This means that more pre-schoolers are being reared outside the home. Often children are not the exclusive or primary responsibility of one parent, and children may spend time alone or unsupervised before or after school while parents are away.

In addition, the Minnesota divorce rate has steadily climbed since 1960, and during the period 1970 to 1980, the ratio of divorces to marriages increased from 1 divorce for every 3.8 marriages to 1 divorce for every 2.5 marriages (Commission on the Economic Status of Women 1984, 9). The impact of this trend on family arrangements is difficult to track with existing census data (McMurray 1984). However, given the dramatic increases in frequency of divorces it is logical to assume an increasing frequency of two-parent families in which either one or both parents have previously been divorced. In some cases these families contain stepchildren. These changes suggest the possibility of important differences in some two-parent families from those in the past. Such differences include families with children from two or more sets of parents, shared parental responsibility with ex-spouses, children living in more than one residence because parents share joint custody, and residual emotional stress within families caused by previous divorces. How these complexities affect the school-age children of these families is an open question, but the rise in divorce rates suggests that whatever the impacts, they occur more frequently now than in the past.

Between 1970 and 1980 there was also a more than doubling of the number of families headed by women aged fifteen to thirty-four, caused by substantial increases in the number of separations and divorces, increasing rates of out-of-wedlock births, especially among the youngest women, and a larger number of people in the twenty to thirty-four year old age group (Minnesota Department of Energy, Planning and Development 1983a).

Sixty-three percent of female-headed families contain children under age eighteen. Male-headed families (without spouses) also rose significantly during this period, with 36 percent of male-headed families containing children under eighteen. The increase in numbers of single adult families means that children are less likely to be living with two parents than in the past. This is especially true in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. The proportion of Minnesota children under eighteen who live with one parent rose from 7 percent in 1970 to 12 percent in 1980 (the national figure was 19 percent in 1980). The vast majority of these children live with their mothers (Minnesota Department of Energy, Planning and Development 1983a).

Among the impacts of the growth in single-parent families is the increasing number of children living in poverty in female-headed families. While the number of households living in poverty in Minnesota dropped from 172,000 to 152,000 between 1970 and 1980, the number of female-headed households with children in poverty increased from 14,000 to 22,000 (Association of Minnesota Counties and Minnesota Office of Economic Opportunity 1983).

The growth in female-headed households with children is expected to continue through the 1980s. In 1980 there were 67,546 such families in Minnesota. Projections indicate an increase by 1990 to somewhere between 79,100 and 120,000 depending on, among other things, divorce and separation rates (Minnesota Department of Energy, Planning and Development 1983b).

Alcohol and Drugs are Widely Used

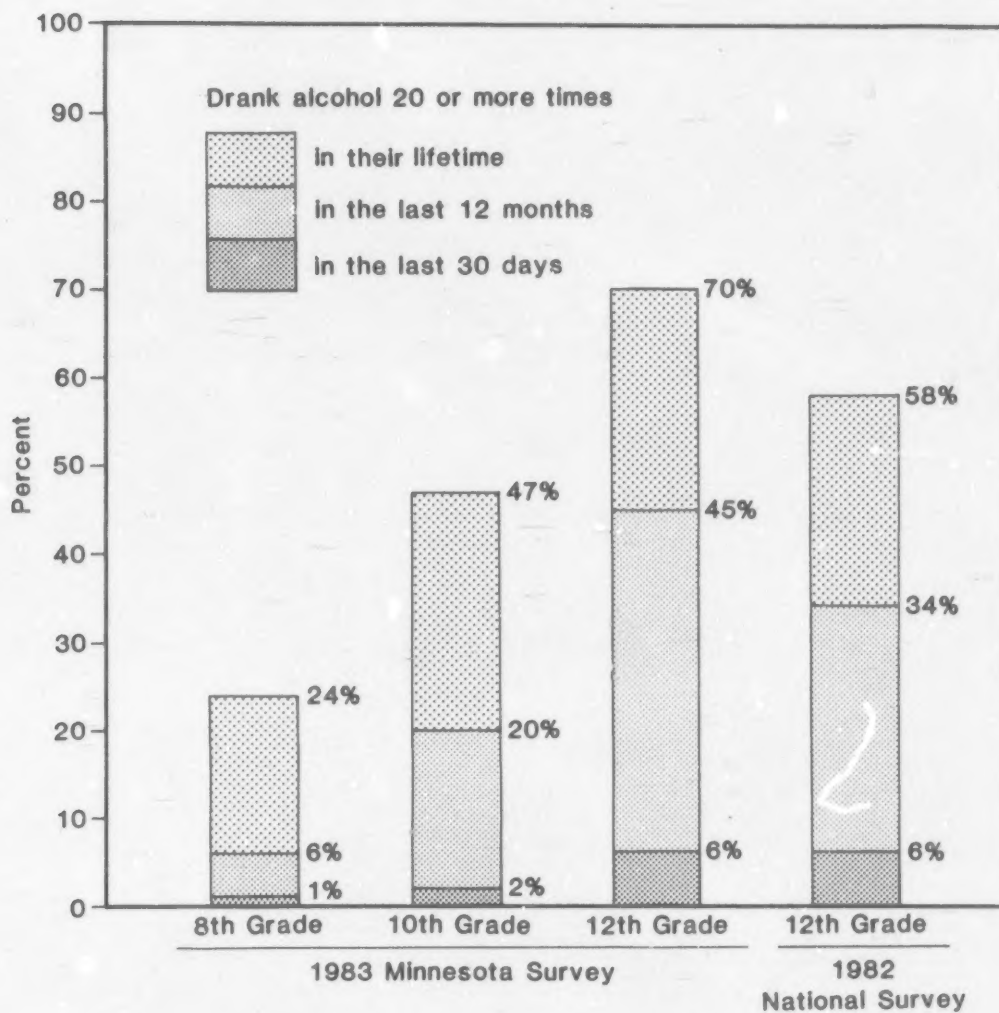
Another important social change which has occurred during recent decades is the increased use of, and exposure to, alcohol and drugs by children, particularly those in junior and senior high school. A 1983 statewide survey of eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders in public and private schools reveals the widespread use of these chemicals by Minnesota youth (Search Institute 1983). Some of the results of the survey are summarized in Figures 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The survey also revealed that 56 percent of eighth graders had first used alcohol in seventh grade or earlier. Thirty-four percent of tenth graders and 26 percent of twelfth graders had used alcohol in seventh grade or earlier (Search Institute 1983, 54). This suggests a widespread and increasing degree of early exposure to alcohol in Minnesota. In fact, Minnesota youth start drinking earlier than youth in other states and continue to drink more when they become high school seniors (Search Institute 1983, 58). In addition, almost half of the high school seniors reported having had five drinks in a row (enough to be legally intoxicated) on one or more occasions during the two weeks prior to the survey (Search Institute 1983, 19). Seventy-one percent of seniors reported driving after drinking one or more times during the year prior to the survey (Search Institute 1983, 28).

Fifty-nine percent of Minnesota high school seniors reported having used an illegal drug (marijuana, LSD, PCP, heroin or other narcotic) during their lifetime (Search Institute 1983, 49-50). Thirty-two percent of the seniors characterized themselves as "frequent" or "very frequent" users of marijuana or hashish and 15 percent said they were "frequent" or "very frequent" users of amphetamines (Search Institute 1983, 52). In addition, Minnesota youth start marijuana use earlier than youth in other states, though by twelfth grade their use of the drug is slightly less than that of youth nationally (Search Institute 1983, 58).

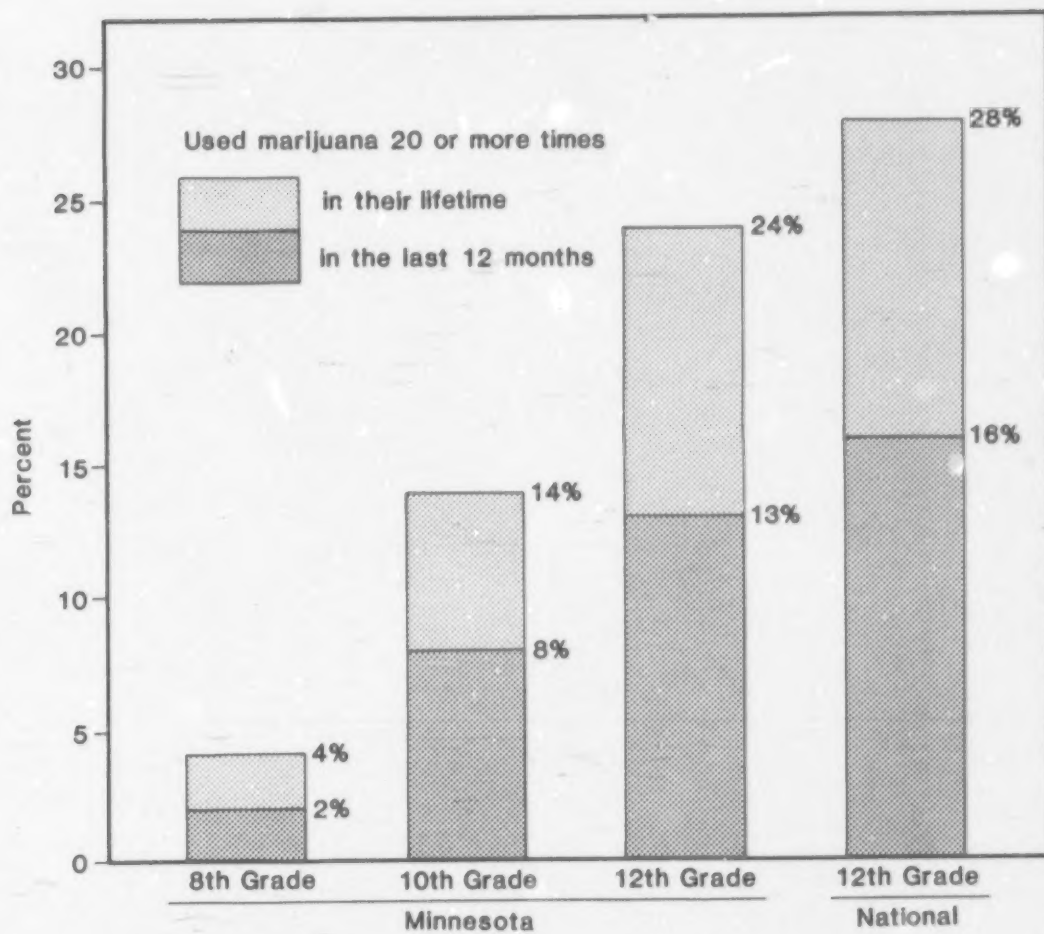
These results confirm what school officials and others have claimed--that chemical abuse among Minnesota youth, particularly high schoolers, is common. This situation creates additional challenges for the schools, not only in providing information to children about the consequences of chemical abuse but, perhaps more importantly, in dealing day-to-day with a significant number of children who use alcohol and drugs.

FIGURE 7
ALCOHOL USE BY MINNESOTA YOUTH



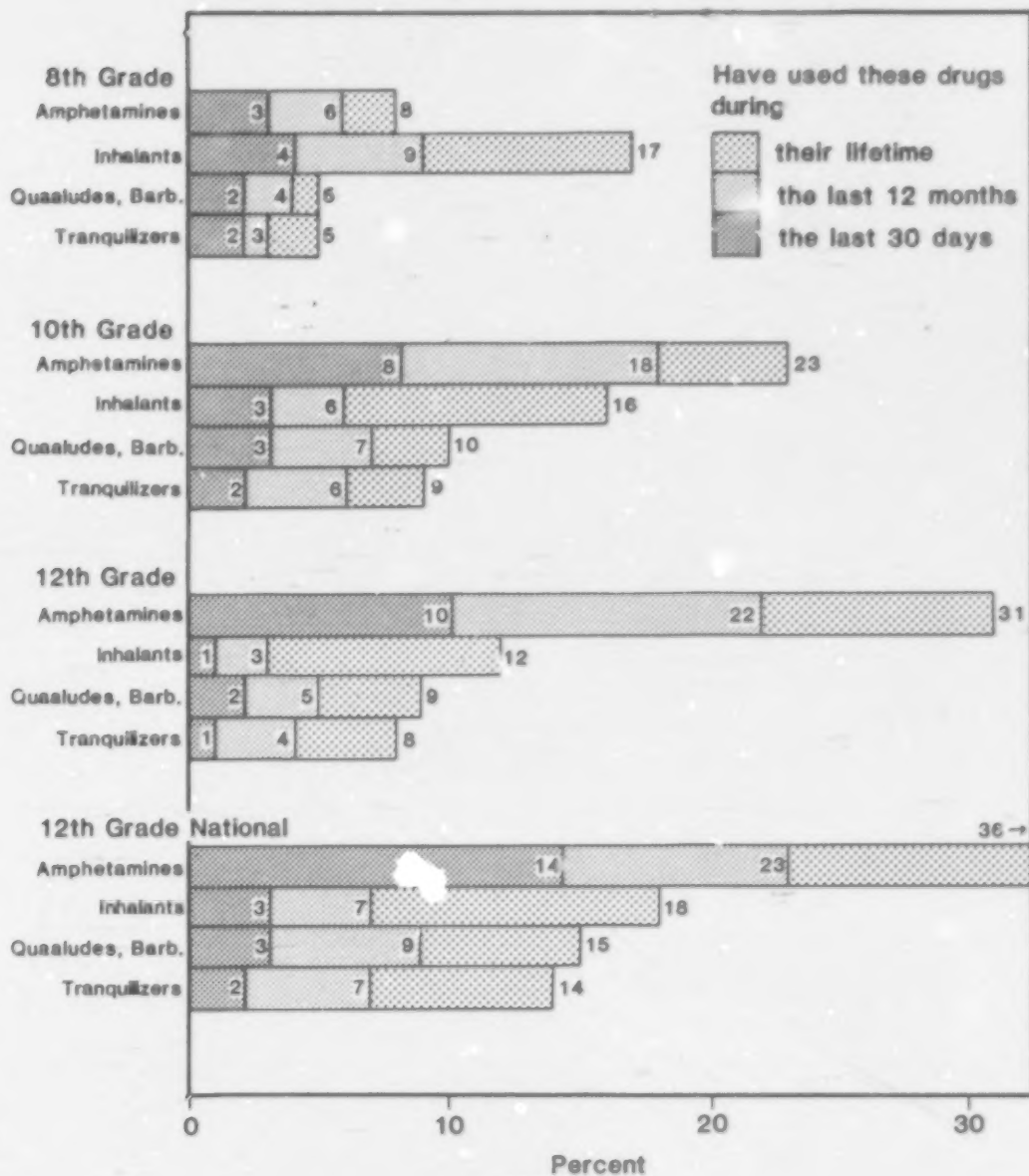
Reprinted with permission from Report on 1983 Minnesota Survey on Drug Use and Drug-Related Attitudes (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1983), p. 17.

FIGURE 8
MARIJUANA USE BY MINNESOTA YOUTH



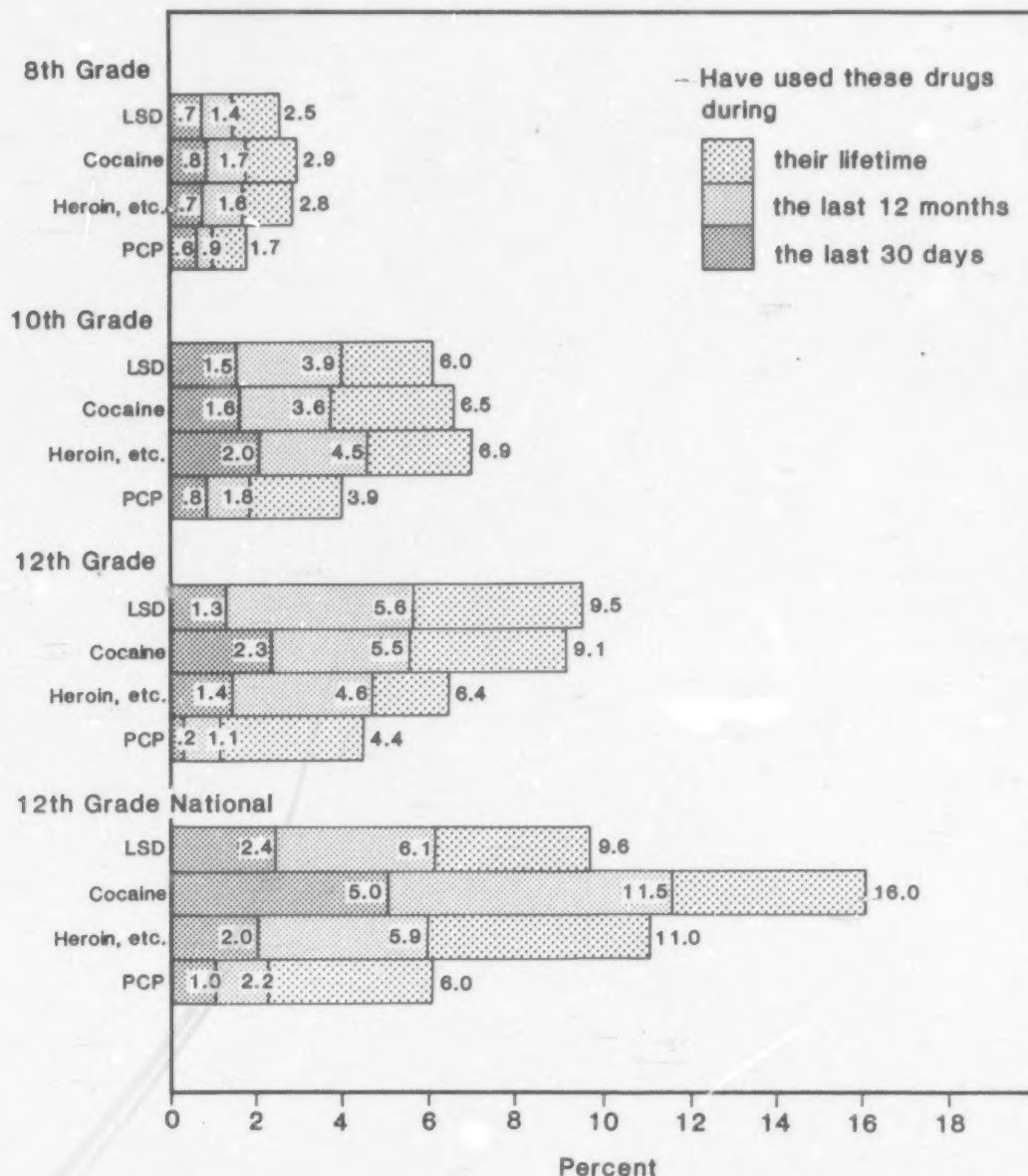
Reprinted with permission from Report on 1983 Minnesota Survey on Drug Use and Drug-Related Attitudes (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1983), p. 39.

FIGURE 9
USE OF AMPHETAMINES, INHALANTS, QUAALUDES/BARBITUATES,
AND TRANQUILIZERS BY MINNESOTA YOUTH



Reprinted with permission from Report on 1983 Minnesota Survey on Drug Use and Drug-Related Attitudes (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1983), p. 47.

FIGURE 10
USE OF LSD, COCAINE, HEROIN, AND PCP BY MINNESOTA YOUTH



Reprinted with permission from Report on 1983 Minnesota Survey on Drug Use and Drug-Related Attitudes (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1983), p. 48.

Children's Sexual Activity Has Increased

More and more children are becoming involved in sexual activity at early ages. United States and Minnesota data indicate the dimensions of this important social trend affecting school-aged children, particularly high schoolers. According to national research the 1970s was a decade of dramatically increased sexual activity among youth, with sexually active teenagers increasing by two-thirds. The average age of first sexual experience is sixteen and by the time children are nineteen only one-fifth of the males and one-third of the females have not had intercourse (New York Times 1981). A 1981 study indicates that of the twenty-nine million Americans aged thirteen to nineteen, twelve million have had sexual intercourse, an increase of 66 percent during the 1970s (cited in Hedin and Simon 1983, 5).

A reflection of this trend in Minnesota is that from 1970 to 1979 teenage pregnancy rates increased 94 percent for fifteen to seventeen year olds (Hedin and Simon 1983, 5). Over 10 percent of all births in Minnesota result from teenage pregnancies. It should be noted, however, that despite this large proportion, it is significantly less than the almost 16 percent of births nationally which result from teenage pregnancies (Commission on the Economic Status of Women 1984, 9).

Earlier sexual activity has important educational implications, especially when one considers that eight out of ten young women who become pregnant at age seventeen or younger never complete high school (Hedin and Simon 1983, 5). But beyond this obvious impact of teenage pregnancy on the lives of Minnesota youth, what are the broader implications of increased early sexual activity on children? How does sexual activity affect their educational performance and attitudes in school? These questions, though they cannot be answered here, are of significance to Minnesota's educational system.

Children Read Less and Watch Television More

There is a great deal of disagreement about the impact of television on children's attitudes as well as their reading habits, skills, and schooling. What is clear is that television is a big part of American children's lives and that children are reading less than in the past.

The average United States student watches 1,300 hours of television a year so that by the time he or she has graduated from high school, he or she will have spent 15,000 hours in front of the television. This compares with 1,000 hours per year in school and 11,000 hours in the classroom by the time of graduation (Heard 1984, L42-3). The prominence of television in children's lives has raised concern about the impact of television images, particularly the many violent images, on children's general attitudes to

life. In addition, much research has been conducted to determine the ways in which TV affects children's abilities to read, learn, and be schooled.

According to a 1983 study on reading and book purchasing by the Book Industry Group Incorporated, the percentage of United States book readers in the sixteen to twenty-one age group dropped from 75 percent in 1978 to 63 percent in 1983 (despite a slight drop in the size of this age group). In the five years between 1978 and 1983 the proportion of non-book readers increased from 19 to 29 percent (cited in Toch 1984, L5). How much of this was caused by television is an open question, much debated in education research circles. Other hotly debated concerns are whether television watching by children (estimated to be twenty hours a week) diverts them away from homework, makes them impatient about the slower pace required for the rigor of schooling, and reduces their ability to comprehend what they read (Heard 1984, L43).

It is not known how much television and what kinds of television Minnesota children watch as compared with children in the nation as a whole. We have no better idea what the implications of television are for Minnesota children than we do for children nationally. There is, however, no obvious reason to believe that the situation is much different in Minnesota than elsewhere. Whatever its particular impacts, the consumption of television and the declining use of books among children represents an important social change which contributes to the challenges facing the schools in the 1980s and beyond.

More Children Are Working During the School Year

Seventy percent of Minnesota sixteen and seventeen year olds work fifteen to twenty hours a week during the school year (Hedin 1983). This substantial change has important consequences for students and their schooling. According to a University of Wisconsin researcher, Laurence Steinberg, "Students being excessively involved in the labor force leads to increased use of drugs and alcohol, diminished school involvement, diminished performance in school and diminished involvement with their families" (Minneapolis Star and Tribune 1983). This increase in working has also made some teenagers "prematurely affluent." For example, a 1983 survey by the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and Research documented significant levels of discretionary spending on the part of many Minnesota teenagers, particularly suburban youth. Twenty-five percent of the suburban teenagers surveyed spent \$200 a month, while 8 percent of urban youths and 12 percent of rural teenagers spent that much. Thirty-six percent of the suburban children spent \$90 to \$100 the month prior to the survey, 24 percent of urban teenagers and 26 percent of rural teenagers spent a like amount. These large sums of discretionary money were spent on personal needs including clothing,

entertainment, cars and gasoline, food, drugs and alcohol (Minneapolis Star and Tribune 1983). Steinberg suggests that this will have an impact on these children's attitudes about money and spending:

Most of them are spending their money on luxury consumables. We have a generation of teenagers earning \$250 a month and they are prematurely affluent. They will never have that much disposable income as adults, so they are getting an unrealistic lesson. 'You earn money and you go out and spend it'.

(Minneapolis Star and Tribune 1983)

Youth Attitudes Are Affected by Social Changes

A number of important changes in the psyche and attitudes of school-age youth have been observed. Minnesota elementary teachers report that children in their classes today are more aware, knowledgeable, sophisticated, and worldly than elementary students of ten to twenty years ago. Some of the teachers suggest this may enhance the students' interest and readiness for reading while others say it mainly shows up as "pseudo-sophistication and street smarts" (Hedin and Conrad 1980, 702-703).

In contrast, Minnesota secondary teachers report that today's secondary students are less intellectually curious and less inquisitive about the world than their counterparts of ten to twenty years ago. They say teenagers are less willing to put effort into education and that school is not as central to their lives as was once the case, particularly because a job rather than school is more important to many of them (Hedin and Conrad 1980).

Minnesota elementary and secondary teachers report that students in their classes are more assertive than they were in the past. They are more expressive, more sure of themselves, more willing to challenge authority, more likely to openly express dislike of school, more at ease with adults, and less fearful of adult authorities (Hedin and Conrad 1980). These teachers also report that students today have a strong need to be entertained and expect instant gratification for personal and educational desires. They see the students as having shorter attention spans, being insatiable in their need for attention, being harder to please, having higher expectations, being less willing to put forth effort to learn, and being motivated more by external rather than internal rewards (Hedin and Conrad 1980). Might some of this be related to the media and entertainment aspects of the new youth culture? There have been significant developments associated with music and music videos, video games, movies, cable television, and home video entertainment--all of which could affect children's attention spans, expectations, learning habits, and ability to respond to internal and external stimuli.

Another important psychological development has been the dramatic increase in youth suicide. In fact, suicide is now the third leading cause of death among fifteen to twenty-four year olds (Tugend 1984).

Student Misbehavior Viewed as Major Problem

As part of his study A Place Called School, John Goodlad surveyed parents, teachers, and students in a national sampling of schools about the seriousness of various problems that occur in schools. All three groups ranked student misbehavior as the biggest problem in elementary, junior high (middle), and high schools. In high schools misbehavior ranked equally with lack of student interest, lack of parent interest, and drug/alcohol use (Goodlad 1983a, 71-74). Is this so surprising given the incredible social changes that have affected school-age youth? Based on other survey results, Goodlad concludes that "all three groups tend to view the misbehavior of the young as pervasive, existing as a condition apart from efforts, including teachers', to control it...The school alone cannot handle problems once shared and controlled by home, church, and school" (Goodlad 1983a, 74). Goodlad's study confirms what many teachers say, that today a big part of what they do is try to keep order in the classroom or handle individual discipline problems.

A national study on misbehavior in United States high schools, prepared for the federal Department of Education, provides further evidence that discipline problems in the schools reflect factors originating primarily outside rather than inside the schools:

The high school and beyond data show that many students have a weak attachment to the normative structure of the school. This alienation appears to originate in the family. Students from families that have been disrupted through death or departure of a parent tend to misbehave more, both in and out of school. The data also suggest that the level of social control exerted by parents in the youth's family is an important determinant of later behavior...One of the strongest predictors of misbehavior is the academic orientation and academic performance of the student...Poor academic prospects may cause students to resent school and motivate them to rebel against the authority of the school and its teachers. Alternatively, students prone to misbehavior may see school work as another demand they wish to rebuff (DiPrete 1981, 199-200).

How widespread misbehavior is among Minnesota school children is unknown. However, the same Department of Education study indicated that in their sample schools from the north and south-central regions of the country have the lowest rates of misbehavior while the western parts of the nation have the highest rates (DiPrete 1981, xx). Whatever the level of misbehavior in Minnesota, national research suggests that these problems reflect important factors outside the schools, which in turn become manifest inside the schools.

The Overall Changes in Students Present A Major Challenge to Minnesota's Schools

As has been the case with all previous generations, children in the 1980s have changed and are changing. Some of these changes have been identified here where information, particularly for Minnesota, was available. What emerges is a picture of students whose families are more likely than in the past to be disrupted by divorce or affected by the fact that both parents are working; whose involvement with alcohol, drugs, and sex occurs earlier and more frequently than in the past; whose major source of information is television rather than books; and whose lives revolve much less around school than they once did, in part because they now have jobs and money with which to contend. On top of all this the youth culture has changed as it does with each generation, bringing with it new activities and social and political symbols.

What does all this mean for today's youth and how do these changes affect the schools? Some of the psychological and attitudinal effects have been identified: elementary students are more "worldly," while secondary students are less intellectually curious, students at both levels are more assertive, and they have a strong need to be entertained, expecting instant gratification. Other attitudes of today's youth, identified in several of the Minnesota Youth Polls conducted by the University Of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and Research, are summarized in Appendix C. Some of these results complement the data provided here while others provide information about how youth like to spend their time, how they think about social responsibility, and their opinions about education and their schools. In a number of cases important differences in opinion emerge among students depending on whether they attend inner city, urban, suburban, or rural schools.

Social changes and their impact on children are of critical importance to Minnesota's public education system. First, the schools are affected day-to-day by the presence of these changes in the children attending school. This influences the efficacy of schools' educational efforts and the difficulty of their tasks. Second, schools can, and often have, served as an intervening force to ameliorate the problems growing out of social changes. Both are important aspects of a major challenge for Minnesota public education--to cope with the changing nature of the children it seeks to educate.

TEACHER DISSATISFACTION IS APPARENT

While a variety of concerns have been raised regarding teachers and the teaching profession, a major challenge, evident from the available Minnesota data, is the current professional status and working conditions of Minnesota teachers.

The national literature on public education has identified a variety of factors leading to teachers' dissatisfaction with their jobs. These are summarized in a recent Rand Corporation study (Darling-Hammond 1984, 9-13):

- Beginning salaries are lower than virtually all other professions requiring a bachelor's degree.
- Salary ceilings are reached much sooner and at a much lower level than those of other college-educated workers.
- Salaries have, on average, lost ground to inflation and to salaries in other occupations over the past decade, despite increases in the average experience level and educational background of teachers.
- Few opportunities for professional growth are available.
- Current working conditions feature a lack of physical support, support services, and administrative support; large class sizes; non-teaching duties; limited opportunity to affect decisions about the school work environment; and inadequate preparation and teaching time.

The study incorporates these factors into a concrete, if colorful, example which illustrates "the modal conditions of teaching work in this country today."

Imagine that you are a high school English teacher. You have at least a master's degree (as do most teachers today) and you would like to impart to your students the joys of great literature and the skills of effective communication. You have at your disposal a set of 100 textbooks for your 140 students. You cannot order additional books so you make copies of some plays and short stories, at your own expense, and you jockey with the fifty other teachers in your school for access to one of the two available typewriters so that you can produce other materials for your class. You stand in line after school to use the secretary's telephone to call parents of students who have been absent or are behind in their work.

You spend roughly twelve hours each week correcting papers, because you believe your students should write a theme each week. You feel guilty that this allows you to spend only five minutes per paper. You spend another six hours each week preparing for your five different sections, mostly writing up the behavioral objectives required by the system's curriculum guide, which you find meaningless and even counterproductive to your goals for your students. You do all of this after school hours, because your one preparation period is devoted to preparing attendance forms, doing other administrative paperwork,

and meeting with students who need extra help. Between classes, you monitor hallways and restrooms, supervise the lunchroom, and track down truants.

You are frustrated that the district's new competency-based curriculum is forcing you to spend more and more of your time teaching students to answer multiple choice questions about the mechanics of grammar. Meanwhile, your efforts to teach writing and critical thinking are discouraged, as they do not seem to fit with the district's mandated curriculum and testing program. You have no input into decisions about curriculum, teaching methods, materials, or resource allocations. You will, of course, never get a promotion; nor will you have an opportunity to take on new responsibilities. You receive frequent feedback about public dissatisfaction with schools and teachers, but little reinforcement from administrators or parents that your work is appreciated. Sometimes you wonder whether your efforts are worth the \$15,000 a year you earn for them...This is not an overdramatization. It reflects the modal conditions of teaching work in this country today.

(Darling-Hammond 1984, 12-13)

To what degree do Minnesota teachers face the same circumstances? While Minnesota teachers' salaries are slightly higher than those in most other states, they have also failed to keep up with inflation (see Chapter III). How these salaries rank with those of other Minnesota professions is not determined here, but relative to comparable professions nationally, Minnesota teachers fare only slightly better than their national counterparts. In addition, the career ladder for teachers in Minnesota is similar to those elsewhere in the nation.

A recent survey of a random sample of Minnesota public school teachers revealed that 58 percent of these teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs, while one-third are satisfied with teaching and just over 9 percent are highly satisfied (Birmingham 1984, 90). The factors Minnesota teachers identified as contributing to dissatisfaction include their pay and the amount of work they do, the chances for advancement on the job, the way company policies are put into practice and the praise they get for doing the job. At the same time the dimensions of teaching they found most satisfying include the chance to do things for other people, the chance to try their own methods of doing the job, the chance to do something that makes use of their abilities, and the chance to do different things from time to time (Birmingham 1984, 90).

Thus, available Minnesota data indicate that the professional status and working conditions of Minnesota teachers are very similar to those elsewhere in the nation. Since teachers are the bulwark of the public education system, addressing their professional status and working conditions is a critical challenge for Minnesota if these people are expected to enter and remain in the profession. Beyond attracting quality people into the school system, improving job satisfaction could be an important factor in maintaining the enthusiasm and effectiveness of those already in teaching.

There is some evidence that teacher dissatisfaction has begun to change the career decisions of potential teachers as well as those already in the system. Between 1973-74 and 1983-84 there was a 32 percent decline in the number of Minnesota high school juniors who expressed interest in becoming teachers (Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board 1984c, 50). In addition, a study of teachers who voluntarily left Minnesota teaching jobs in 1977 shows that only 6 percent stayed in the teaching profession. The majority of those who left the profession reported that they like their current jobs better than teaching and that they are paid more. Sixty-six percent of the respondents said they would not return to public school jobs if given the opportunity (Minnesota State Planning Agency 1980, 8).

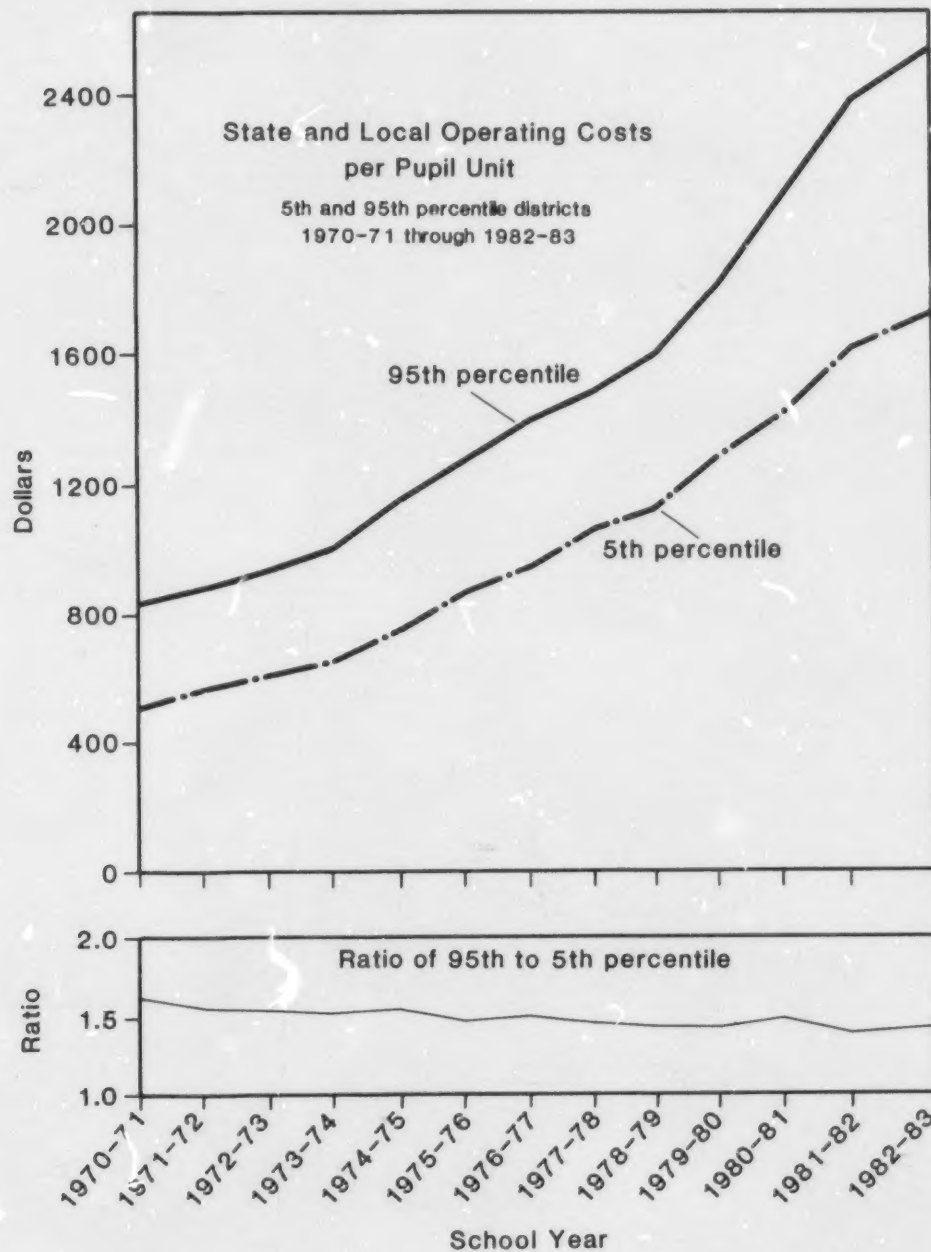
SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL DISPARITIES CONTINUE TO EXIST

A major aspect of the reform movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s was improving educational opportunity by trying to minimize financial disparities among Minnesota's school districts. In 1971, a constitutional court challenge of the state's school finance system, Van Dusartz v. Priest, reinforced the belief held by some that reliance on local property wealth for funding public schools was creating unequal educational opportunities for Minnesota children. As a result of this concern (and the concern about rising local property taxes) Minnesota's school finance system was reformed in 1971. The state's contribution to school district revenue was increased by substantially raising the foundation aid level and placing a limitation on the taxes that a district could raise against real property. Additional property tax relief was also provided (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 34-35).

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the legislature modified the finance system in ways that again increased reliance on local property taxes as well as increasing expenditure and tax rate disparities. These changes were particularly significant during the state's financial crisis of 1981 and 1982 (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 35-46). Recent studies show that these modifications have significantly undermined the effort to minimize revenue and expenditure disparities among districts. In fact, the levels of disparity in per pupil revenues and expenditures in the early 1980s remained virtually the same as those which existed in the early 1970s, when the state's school finance system was overhauled in the face of a constitutional court challenge (Peek and Wilson 1983a, 44-46; Krupey and Hopeman 1983, 490-501).

Figure 11 demonstrates the history of the expenditure disparity between 1970-71 and 1982-83. While the dollar gap between the high and low spending districts has grown

FIGURE 11
MINNESOTA'S ATTEMPT TO EQUALIZE EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES



Data source: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Division.

significantly since 1970-71 the ratio of the high to the low spending districts has remained virtually unchanged throughout the period.

Figure 12* presents the geographic distribution of expenditure disparities in 1982-83, identifying the highest spending quarter of the districts in black, the lowest spending quarter in white and the remaining half of the districts (in the middle range) in gray. The median district spends \$1,934 per pupil, but the range is from \$1,536 to \$4,935. Even the interquartile range is quite large with the 25th percentile school spending \$1,792 compared to \$2,109 for the 75th percentile school--a difference of \$317 per student or 18 percent. Two types of districts in the highest quartile stand out. The smallest districts often are classified as having a high expenditure per student, only because they have so few students. Joining them in this highest class are the central cities and older suburbs where high seniority and declining enrollments have pushed up operating costs per student.

NEW TECHNOLOGY AND GREATER SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IS ENCOURAGED

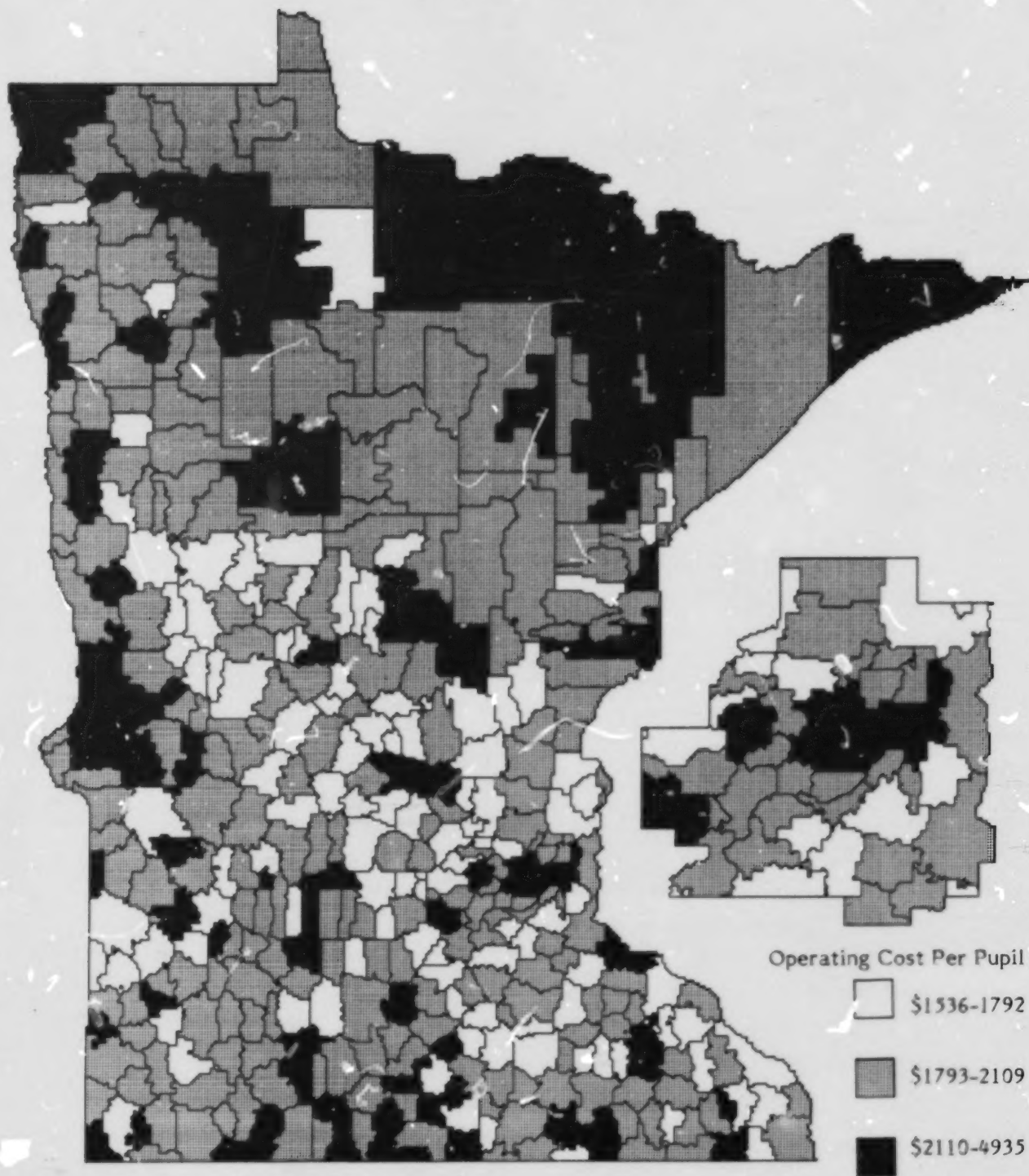
Another challenge facing the schools is the call for the addition of new technology and technology-related curriculum to reflect the needs of a society increasingly reliant on high technology, particularly computers and telecommunications. In addition, Minnesota schools are being asked to adopt a wide range of reforms, reflecting recent research on improving the effectiveness of schooling. The Minnesota Department of Education is currently working with individual school districts to promote acceptance of both of these sets of responsibilities.

New Technology

There has been widespread discussion nationally and in Minnesota about the need to prepare children for working and living in an America run by high technology. In response to this concern, the 1983 legislature enacted the Minnesota Technology and Educational Improvement Act, containing a number of provisions, with attending appropriations, for encouraging districts to upgrade their capability in this area:

*This map is one of a series being prepared at CURA as part of the CURA/College of Education Project on the Future of K-12 Public Education in Minnesota. The entire series examines variations among Minnesota's schools districts on a wide range of educational factors, including finance, school environment, and community environment. The series will be published as a separate report later this year.

FIGURE 12
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURE DISPARITIES
(State and Local Operating Costs Per Pupil, 1982-83)



Data source: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Division.

- Each school district is encouraged to develop as part of its educational policy a written plan describing how technology will be used to provide educational opportunities for people of all ages residing in the district. They are asked to formulate goals for implementing the use of technology, including instruction and management uses; devise procedures for integrating technology into community education; and prepare ways to evaluate and report progress toward meeting those goals. The state provides aid for the development of such plans. The plans will be evaluated in relation to a state model plan and criteria that are to be developed by the Department of Education (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 6-7).
- Districts with plans approved by the state Board of Education will receive aid to provide inservice training for school staff on the use of technology in education. In addition, the state Department of Education will provide supplemental regional or statewide inservice training for district staff (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 7-8).
- Regional instructional computing coordinators with expertise in educational technology will be provided by the Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 8).
- The state Board of Education will designate technology demonstration sites, awarding each of these a grant for the program's first two years (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 8). The sites selected are listed in Table 12. Some of these are individual districts while others are collaboratives of several districts formed specifically for this purpose.
- The state Department of Education will compile, publish, and distribute to districts a list of high quality courseware packages for use in the schools and districts will receive state aid for use of approved courseware. In addition, the Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium is authorized to develop and design courseware packages to be sold at cost to Minnesota districts and at commercial rates to the general public and districts outside Minnesota (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 9-11).

All of these provisions are in various stages of implementation.

TABLE 12
TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION SITES SELECTED BY
THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Individual Districts

- Bloomington
- Blue Earth
- Hopkins
- Minneapolis
- Shakopee
- Robbinsdale

Collaboratives

- St. Louis Park and Tower-Sudan
- Rochester and Austin
- IN-TECH, includes Anoka-Hennepin and eight other districts
- Knowledge Interactive Distribution System (KIDS), includes Mankato and fifteen other districts (The status of this project and the number of districts involved is subject to change.)
- East Central Minnesota Educational Cable Cooperative, includes Cambridge-Isanti and six other districts
- Minnesota Valley Tele-Network, includes Montevideo and eight other districts
- Northeast Educational Technology Consortium, includes Duluth and seven other districts
- Subject Matter Awareness--Implementation of Resources in Technology (SMART), includes the Northwest Educational Cooperative Service Unit and sixteen districts
- Woodland Cooperative Center Communicasting, includes Clarissa and three other districts

SOURCE: Janet Kielb (Minnesota Department of Education) conversation with Thomas Peek, February 6, 1985; Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Technology Demonstration Sites (White Bear Lake, MN: Minnesota Curriculum Services Center, September 1984), pp. 6-34.

Adoption of School Effectiveness Research

One of the major elements of the recent reform debate is the discussion about more effective ways for schooling children particularly as this relates to pedagogy. In 1983 the Minnesota Legislature took steps to encourage districts to adopt methods for creating more effective schools. The Minnesota Technology and Educational Improvement Act included these provisions:

- The Commissioner of Education is to appoint an advisory task force to assist the Department of Education, in cooperation with the Educational Cooperative Service Units, in developing an implementation model for training school district staff in instructional effectiveness. Instruction will be based on established principles of instructional design and essential elements of effective instruction as determined by educational research (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 2).
- The Commissioner of Education will administer a pilot program of training models for instructional effectiveness, implemented in at least twenty pilot sites throughout the state. The pilot program was to be evaluated for the commissioner by January 1, 1985 (Minnesota Department of Education 1983a, 2).

These provisions have been implemented. The twenty-six pilot sites are listed in Table 13. The program has identified fifteen characteristics of effective schools, based on education research, which will form the framework for working with the pilot sites. These are outlined in Table 14.

The efforts to incorporate technology into education and foster school effectiveness present additional challenges to Minnesota public education. The degree to which technology and effective teaching are currently reflected in the schools is not fully understood and how successful the state's efforts will be to expand on these is an open question. But there is no question that such efforts represent significant steps toward addressing educational needs that have been identified by reform advocates as critical in preparing Minnesota youth for the future.

TABLE 13
PILOT SITES FOR MINNESOTA SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRAM

Region 1 and 2

Horace May Elementary, Bemidji
Solway Elementary, Bemidji

Region 3

Churchill Elementary, Cloquet
Tower-Sudan High School, Tower

Region 4

Probstfield Elementary, Moorhead
Osakis Elementary, Osakis
Perham High School, Perham

Region 5

Remer Elementary, Remer
Baxter Elementary, Brainerd

Region 7

Technical High School, St. Cloud
Cambridge Middle School, Cambridge
Pine City, Pine City

Region 6 and 8

Marion Elementary, Montevideo
West Elementary, Worthington
Milan, Milan
Central, Slayton

Region 9

Lake Crystal Elementary, Lake Crystal
Winnebago High School, Winnebago

Region 10

Hayfield High School, Hayfield
Jefferson Elementary, Winona

Region 11

Jackson Elementary, St. Paul
Jefferson Alternative, St. Paul
Central Elementary, Norwood
Stonebridge Elementary, Stillwater
Columbia Heights High School, Columbia Heights
Richfield High School, Richfield

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota School Effectiveness Program
(St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, September 19, 1984).

TABLE 14
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS CHARACTERISTICS IDENTIFIED BY
THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- A common sense of purpose and clearly defined goals and expectations related to student achievement.
- A school climate which supports those goals and expectations.
- Building-level leadership which encourages and monitors progress toward high goals and expectations.
- School-site management with considerable autonomy in determining the exact means by which the goals and expectations are to be met.
- District-level support for building-level management of improvement efforts.
- Collaborative planning and collegial relationships among staff and administration at the building level.
- A building-level staff development program directed toward school goals, and closely related to the instructional program of the school.
- Curriculum articulation and organization with appropriate time devoted to planned, purposeful instruction focused on desired outcomes and coordinated across grade levels.
- Parent involvement in their child's education and parental support of the goals and expectations of the school.

INSTRUCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- High expectations commonly shared among staff for the performance of all students.
- Teacher-designed instruction that maximizes substantial learning time, monitors student progress, and gives regular feedback to students regarding progress.
- Grouping that is flexible, promotes high expectations for all learners, and encourages social cohesion and interaction among all students.
- Effectively structured and appropriately managed group learning emphasized.
- Positive teacher-student interaction.
- Order and discipline communicating the seriousness and purposefulness with which the school takes its tasks.

SOURCE: Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota School Effectiveness Program St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Education, September 19, 1984).

THE POLITICAL CLIMATE CHANGES

The state of Minnesota has a reputation for a long-standing and continuing interest in public education. While its financial commitment to the schools has waned in recent years, it remains above most states in its education spending. From time to time it has received recognition for innovation in educational finance and programming. However, some question whether this reputation is still deserved and worry that the state has grown complacent about its schools--they advocate reform and innovation. Others are concerned about the financial prospects of Minnesota's private schools or believe parents should have more choice in school selection--they advocate state aid to private schools or education vouchers for parents. A few criticize the schools for undermining traditional American values and advocate curriculum changes and book censorship. All of this occurs within the context of widespread concern about taxes and the growing influence of the tax limitation movement at the federal, state, and local levels.

So the schools, in addition to coping with the other challenges discussed in this chapter, find themselves embroiled in a debate driven by four movements, each pressing for change.

Schools Challenged by the "Excellence Movement"

Some say it began with the report of the President's Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk. Others see its antecedents in early research and reports including the work on effective schools. Perhaps it grew out of public anxiety about the future of the United States economy or grew because of social and political changes in America. Whatever the reasons, the excellence movement emerged as an influential political force in the 1980s, both nationally and in Minnesota.

Out of a myriad of state and national reports, several important themes of reform have been enunciated: get back to basics, improve high level skills, focus on "learner outcomes" rather than "institutional inputs," improve teachers and the teaching profession, involve broader communities, and enhance accountability. Much of this discussion is focused on state-level actions to be taken by the legislature, the state Board of Education, the Department of Education, or the Board of Teaching. In large measure the reforms are regulatory, having to do with establishing standards, mandating requirements, or monitoring progress.

For some, the excellence movement is an ill wind blown into the state from outside, reflecting the greater reform needs of other states and the nation as a whole. For others, this movement is a fresh breeze with the potential to invigorate the stale air of complacency about the quality of Minnesota's public schools. It is likely that both views

are partially correct. The success of the movement in attracting the attention of the media, the education community, state officials, and the public, has been to place Minnesota public education under close scrutiny. What all of this will mean for public education policy remains an open question.

Some Call For Public Support of Private Schools

Helping to shape the political climate around education is the movement to expand the funding for, and role of, private schools. People within this movement approach the issue with two distinct concerns. One is the desire to enhance the revenue of existing private schools in order to assure their survival at some level of quality. The other is the desire to increase parents' choice and create new incentives for additional educational options by providing education vouchers available to parents who wish to send their children to private as well as public schools.

In the 1950s Minnesota began providing a variety of public subsidies to Minnesota's private schools, including tax deductions to parents who enroll their children in these schools. Since that time, the state has expanded the types and amounts of support it provides despite some ongoing opposition and periodic court challenges of some aspects of this support. In 1983, after a long period of litigation, Minnesota's tuition tax deduction law was upheld by the United States Supreme Court.

In the meantime, Minnesota private school enrollments dipped sharply during the 1960s and 1970s (from 159,000 in 1959-60 to 91,000 in 1979-80) and grew slightly in the early 1980s (to 92,000 in 1982-83). In 1982-83 almost 11 percent of all elementary and secondary students attended private schools. Ninety-four percent of these children attend church-affiliated schools, primarily Roman Catholic, which comprise over 68 percent of private school enrollments (Minnesota Department of Education 1984f, 1-9).

Despite increasing levels of state subsidy--approximately \$53.5 million dollars in the 1981-83 biennium (Mueller 1984)--there is evidence to suggest that some private schools are facing serious financial problems. A recent survey was conducted of twenty-five secondary schools associated with the Minnesota Independent School Fund, most of which are located in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. It provides a rare look at the financial situation of private schools, not usually available because of the privacy of data. The survey reveals that despite the relatively stable enrollments of the past few years, growth in private endowments, and substantial increases in tuition, these schools are in need of additional revenues if they are to maintain program quality (House 1984, 70-76). The study concludes:

Together these urgent needs to address the issues of faculty salaries, educational resources, and, in many cases, capital improvements that have been delayed or are just arising, present serious financial challenges, in some cases even crises, to the MIFS schools. Clearly, tuition, which already supplies only a portion of needed revenues, cannot be allowed to rise beyond the reach of the families that the schools serve.

Thus, independent schools are faced with an immediate and urgent need to establish new sources of revenue...the future of independent secondary education in Minnesota and elsewhere may well depend on how the schools answer this question.

(House 1984, 75-76)

This situation is at least partially responsible for the increased advocacy of public support for the state's private schools. Public support of private schools remains controversial, drawing much criticism as well as support. (In fact, the Governor's Tax Study Commission, chaired by George Latimer, seriously considered the abolition of the tuition tax deduction as part of its overall tax reform plan.)

Some school reform advocates believe private schools represent an opportunity to give parents greater choice in selecting their children's education and to infuse into Minnesota's K-12 system a healthy competition for resources that will stimulate improvement. The proponents of education vouchers vary in their orientations. Some wish to expand public subsidy of parents' choice for religious or other special training that now exists in the private schools. Others look to the day when, through vouchers, a plethora of new program possibilities in a multitude of settings become available to satisfy as much diversity as exists among Minnesota students and their parents. Some proponents think that forcing public schools to compete with publicly-subsidized private schools will improve the quality and efficiency of all schools that survive the competition. And others, frustrated by what they see as the inability or unwillingness of public schools to change to better serve children, believe it is time to force the schools to reform by threatening them with competition for education dollars.

The discussion of public support for private schools, and particularly education vouchers, has been a substantial part of the Minnesota debate on public education and one of its more controversial parts. This reflects the unresolved conflict about public support of private schools which has persisted throughout Minnesota's education history (see Chapter II). Underlying the controversy are three issues about which people fundamentally disagree. These are issues on which conflict is inevitable and where opinions are based, in part, on ideological commitments or prior assumptions.

- Should there be a clear "wall of separation" between public institutions and religion. Does the United States Constitution require separation of church and state?

- Are society and its members better served by socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and religious integration or by pluralism and decentralization?
- Should public institutions, including the schools, be financed and operated through the government or should these services be provided through competition in the private marketplace?

The movement for public support of private schools has one particularly significant implication for the political climate now challenging the schools. It presents a situation in which public schools must compete with private schools for public dollars (as a group through the existing subsidies and as individual schools through the voucher). This comes at a time when the schools continue to struggle with the effects of a decade of contraction, brought on in part by fiscal constraints.

The "New Right" Criticizes Minnesota Schools

Why aren't our children learning? Is it because educators "Can't Teach" as reported in Time Magazine, June 16, 1980? Is it because education in the affective domain, values clarification, situation ethics, behavioral modification, and invasion of privacy questionnaires are replacing cognitive education? Is it because students are being taught how to commit suicide, how to have sexual intercourse, and, of course, what "their rights" are, to have abortions, use contraceptives, etc.?... Parents and taxpayers, for the sake of our children, wake up...What the MEA proposes is bigger doses of more of the same!

Terry Todd, National Chairman, Stop Textbook Censorship Committee of Eagle Forum (St. Paul Pioneer Press 1981)

...Since civilization has flourished on Almighty God's sex role dictates, the opposite or sex role reversal heads mankind backwards into savagery. By removing sexist language from our schools and by the indoctrination of our boys and girls with equality, sex role reversal, "career," and sex education...which our schools do, we break the female's natural tendency to desire marriage and have babies. As a consequence, should pregnancy occur, she either aborts her child or is desirous of day care centers so she is free to pursue her lifestyle/career as she sees fit. Thus, it is, that the moral denegration replaces moral virtues...

Janet Egan, Parents of Minnesota, Inc. (Egan 1982)

A great deal of national attention has been given to the political influence of the so-called New Right whose leaders have enunciated conservative perspectives on a wide range of issues, including public education. They believe that the public schools are undermining traditional (Christian) American values through the teaching of secular

humanism, Darwin's theory of evolution, sex education, and sexual equality. As a result, the New Right initiates actions to censor public school books and other materials through several organizations including: Educational Research Analysts (Mel and Norma Gabler) of Longview, Texas; Eagle Forum (Phyllis Schlafly) of Alton, Illinois; Pro-Family Forum of Fort Worth, Texas; the Heritage Foundation and the American Legislative Exchange Council both of Washington D.C.; and the Moral Majority (Rev. Jerry Falwell) of Lynchburg, Virginia. Generally in favor of "right to work" laws, New Right organizations also oppose teacher's unions (Massie 1982).

New Right groups and their constituents have been active in Minnesota, particularly in seeking the removal or restriction of materials in the public schools deemed by them to be unsuitable. Censorship has been encouraged statewide by Young Parents Alert, Parents of Minnesota, and Stop Textbook Censorship Now of the Eagle Forum (Minnesota Civil Liberties Union 1983, 4). While most Minnesota censorship challenges come from individual parents (who may or may not be involved with such groups), some challenges come directly from these organizations (Minnesota Civil Liberties Union 1983, 8).

Surveys were conducted in 1981 and 1982 by the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union to determine the extent of censorship of library materials in public elementary and secondary schools and in public libraries. While less than a third of the school librarians returned the survey, this limited sample reported censorship activities at sufficiently high levels to suggest that in Minnesota this is a significant occurrence. Thirty-seven percent of the sample's 244 secondary school librarians reported challenges to library resources while 52 percent of the 149 elementary school librarians reported challenges. Thirty-six percent of the resources challenged in secondary schools were removed or restricted by school officials. Thirty-three percent of the resources challenged in elementary schools were removed or restricted (Minnesota Civil Liberties Union 1983, 5-6).

Beyond their impact on school materials, New Right organizations and their leaders contribute to the political climate challenging public education in Minnesota. Indeed, in this regard Minnesota has been something of a hotbed of activity. Minnesota activist Terry Todd, South St. Paul, is National Chairman of the Eagle Forum's Stop Textbook Censorship Committee. Janet Egan, St. Paul Park, of Parents of Minnesota has received national attention for her censorship activities at the state and local levels. While the New Right is less visible at the state level because it primarily focuses on local schools, its influence on the debate about public education must be recognized.

Tax Limitation Movement Grows At the Federal, State, and Local Levels

All of the current discussion about Minnesota public education occurs in the context of the growing influence of the tax limitation movement. In large measure, politics at the national level and the policies of the Reagan administration revolve around the issues of lowering and simplifying income taxes and restricting the growth of domestic spending. In Minnesota, state officials are caught up in a debate about the state's reputation for high taxes (relative to other states) and what some say is a bad "business climate." DFLers and Republicans alike apparently agree that some state income tax reduction is desirable, although there is disagreement on the level and type of reduction. At the local level is growing concern about property taxes, which have risen dramatically in the 1980s in response to state and federal reductions in aids to schools, counties, and cities.

In short, all three levels of government are influenced by a politics of fiscal constraint which views public services as often costly and inefficient and new programs or program expansions as unnecessary or not affordable. This political climate has three potential implications for public schools and the current debate about their reform. First, it influences the types of criticisms raised by reformers, focusing attention on issues like efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and accountability to taxpayers. Second, it fosters a tendency to ignore or redefine problems which may require substantial dollars if they are to be addressed. Hence the failure to recognize and seriously discuss the declining purchasing power of teachers' salaries or the recent financial contraction of the system. Third, it encourages a lack of realism about the costs of reform. This may explain why part of the Minnesota Business Partnership's proposal for a "major restructuring" of the state's public education system is that the reform be accomplished at no real (after inflation) increase in expenditures.

Despite Changing Political Climate, Minnesotans Give Their Schools High Marks

Minnesotans' assessment of their schools is more favorable than that reflected in the current Minnesota debate or in national public opinion polls, according to a recent survey published by CURA (Craig and Pederson 1985). Seventy-nine percent of the statewide sample gave Minnesota's public schools a favorable rating of "excellent" (23.8 percent) or "good" (55.2 percent) while 16.5 percent rated them "fair" and 4.4 percent "poor." By comparison, the most recent Gallup Poll on public education, while indicating a dramatic 11 point jump in public support of the nation's schools since last year, showed that less than half of Americans grade their local schools "A" (10 percent) or "B" (32 percent). Thirty-five percent gave "C's," 11 percent "D's," and 4 percent failed the schools (Gallup

1984, 25-26). Nationwide opinion is even less favorable when asked about the nation's schools as a whole rather than their local schools. In response to that question, only one-quarter graded the schools "A" (2 percent) or "B" (23 percent), while 40 percent gave "C's," 11 percent "D's," and 4 percent failed the schools (Gallup 1984, 26). In addition to a favorable assessment of the schools today, more than two-thirds of Minnesotans indicated that they find the quality of Minnesota public schools today better or the same as ten years ago (43.2 percent better and 25.8 percent the same). Thirty-one percent find the quality of Minnesota schools is worse (Craig and Pederson 1985, 10).

Education is viewed by Minnesotans as one of the most important issues facing the people of the state today. In the CURA survey, education ranked third (16.8 percent) when people were asked to identify the two or three most important issues facing Minnesotans today. Ahead of education were taxes (65.4 percent) and unemployment (30.8 percent). It is hard to say whether the interest in public education reflects the current debate on the issue or helps to fuel it, perhaps both.

While national polls indicate a significant level of dissatisfaction with public education and many Minnesota public leaders are advocating reform, Minnesotans remain positive about the schools and have not generally seen a deterioration in their quality during the last decade. Even so, the state finds itself amidst a major debate about quality in public education--a debate that significantly affects the political climate in which the schools now exist.

V. A POLICY FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING THE ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF MINNESOTA PUBLIC EDUCATION

Numerous proposals have been made to reform Minnesota public education. Just as doctors diagnosing medical problems and prescribing treatment do so with an understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the patient, reformers of public education need to recognize the basic elements of the education system and the various processes governing its operation so that change can be prescribed that will work within that system.

Public education presents a very complex world. It reflects the interests of numerous groups who hold multiple and sometimes conflicting goals. It consists of a number of basic operational elements through which academic achievement and the other goals of the system are accomplished. The numerous groups, goals, and operational elements interrelate in a system governed by nine distinct types of decision-making processes, each of which affects a part of what the system does and influences the degree to which, and the means with which, the system can be changed.

Identifying this complexity is critical in understanding why public education looks as it does today. Moreover, strategies for reform must recognize this complexity if they are to be effective in actually bringing about change. What follows is a policy framework which attempts to describe the key elements of the anatomy and physiology of Minnesota public education in order to assist in the diagnosis of problems and the prescription of reform. The implications arising from this picture of the system, both for reform and the current Minnesota educational debate, are identified.

NUMEROUS INTERESTED GROUPS

It is often said that "everybody thinks they are educational experts." At least it seems as though everyone has an opinion about education. And, certainly everyone does have a stake in Minnesota's public education, either because they are directly involved with it, or because they, as state citizens, are affected by its performance. Because so many consider themselves involved, a diversity of goals and expectations flourish along with varying assessments of the quality of the education system.

Groups that have a major interest in Minnesota's public education system and significantly affect its operation are listed here.

- **Students** -- Not only does their future depend in part on their education, but for thirteen years a major portion of their lives will be lived in the schools. They are the "basic stock" with which the system must work to achieve its goals.
- **Parents** -- The schools not only provide educational opportunity to their children, but also a place for their children to grow up, be supervised, and socialized. For an increasing number of children, the schools play the major parenting role. Parents, both individually and collectively, have a huge stake in how this extension of their parental role is carried out.
- **Local communities** -- For many communities, the school is the most important local institution. Not only is it the place where children are educated, but it can be the center of community facilities, programs, and activities. It can also be one of the few important local political entities. And for many communities it is the single most expensive tax jurisdiction, greatly affecting local property taxes.
- **State citizenry** -- All citizens are affected by the level of education attained by their fellow citizens, with whom they will interact in commerce and industry, government, and all other aspects of society. Further, because K-12 education represents the single largest portion of the state budget, the average taxpayer contributes significantly to the state's portion of education funding.
- **Minnesota business community** -- The business community, in general, needs a labor force that has employment skills or is trainable. It relies on public education to provide that workforce. As a result the business community has sometimes played a key advocacy role regarding education or worked directly with school districts on issues of mutual concern.
- **Teachers** -- Not only are teachers the bulwark of the system but they, like the students, spend a significant portion of their lives inside the schools. They express their interest not only in their own classrooms, departments, and schools, but also collectively at the district level and through their union representatives at the state and national levels.
- **Administrators** -- They occupy an administrative structure that "rides herd" over the day-to-day activities of the school. They are key policy-makers in the ongoing management of education operating at the district and building levels.
- **Local school boards** -- In Minnesota, 436 local school boards are responsible for the majority of decisions affecting the schools. They provide direct access--

through elections and advocacy--to citizens wishing to influence their local schools.

- **State officials** -- The governor, legislature, State Board of Education, Commissioner of Education, and others are responsible for carrying out the state's constitutionally-assigned responsibility for public education. These officials are responsible for financial, regulatory, reporting, and data gathering functions of the state's school system. They reflect statewide interests in education and have a critical influence in the operation of the schools.
- **Federal officials and courts** -- Representing the interests of the nation as a whole, federal officials and courts have a stake in Minnesota public education. Federal officials, including the president, the Congress, and the United States Department of Education are responsible for important financial, regulatory, reporting, and data-gathering activities. The federal courts have also played a significant role in public education through their decisions regarding desegregation, discrimination, financing, and regulation of the schools.
- **Colleges and universities** -- While their stake in the "products" of the K-12 system may be no greater than those of any other sector of society (than commerce and industry, for example) colleges and universities directly influence K-12 education through their admission policies. These institutions set the academic standards that students must meet to pursue, as most do, further education. Moreover, colleges and universities are solely responsible for the training of teachers and other educational professionals and to some degree influence state and local educational policy and practices through their educational research efforts.
- **Foundations** -- National and Minnesota foundations have played a significant role in fostering innovation in public education. Representing interests found within the community, foundations provide funding for special programs, research, and experimental and pilot projects in education.
- **Education-related businesses** -- Producers of textbooks, curriculum guides, computers and their software, and other instructional materials and equipment have a major financial stake in public education. In addition, these businesses significantly impact schooling through the content and quality of their products.

MULTIPLE, SOMETIMES CONFLICTING GOALS

Given the crowded field of interested groups, it is no wonder that public education is characterized by multiple and sometimes conflicting goals. Each of these groups pursues, often simultaneously, actions that serve their particular interest or reflect their particular perspective.

There are, obviously, numerous goals reflected in the schools. Listed here are the major types of goals held concurrently by the various interested groups that find significant expression in Minnesota's current system of public education.

- **Academic achievement** -- This is clearly a central goal. Parents, students, teachers, school boards, and virtually all other parties want the schools to adequately prepare children for work or college. How to realize academic achievement is hotly debated and involves issues about curriculum, pedagogy, and technology.
- **"Proper" socialization** -- One of the things schools produce, for better or for worse, is citizens. The schools play a major role in preparing children to be employees, consumers, spouses, parents, voters, and community members. Some of the goals of education have to do with socializing children as to the type of personal characteristics, values, and aspirations that the community sees as desirable or undesirable. Socialization goals are reflected not only in instructional programs, but also in extra-curricular activities and day-to-day life within the schools.
- **Surrogate parenting** -- Increasingly, schools are expected (by parents and the community) to play a parenting role that involves guiding the physical and emotional development of children, imposing discipline, teaching values, and passing on basic life skills as well as, simply, "babysitting" for parents.
- **Opportunities for athletic and other non-scholastic experience** -- Beyond instruction, socialization, and parenting, the schools are asked to provide opportunities for children to participate in non-scholastic activities. Of these, athletics is probably the most significant in terms of parental involvement and financial cost. For some parents and students, achievement in athletics, band, choir, or other activities is of greater importance than scholastic achievement.
- **Accountability and responsiveness** -- Parents, local taxpayers, and school boards all pressure the schools to meet the needs of the community. Sometimes this takes the form of a conference between parent and teacher or between parent

and administrator. It may be a school board action in response to public controversy. Or, pressure may be brought to bear by the PTA or another organized citizens group. The public also pressures state officials to take actions to improve the accountability and responsiveness of the system.

- **Cost abatement** -- State and local taxpayers, particularly if they have no children in school, press the schools for cost abatement. Achieving this goal involves efforts to improve efficiency, cut programs, and hold back salary increases. Efforts to achieve this goal are fueled by increasing concern about rising state income taxes and hikes in local property taxes.
- **Improving teachers' jobs** -- With a labor-intensive activity like education, it is not surprising that employee goals with respect to salary, benefits, collective bargaining, job security, and working conditions are important in the operation of the schools.
- **Efficient and orderly management** -- Administrators, in addition to whatever other goals they have, are interested in the efficient and orderly management of the school system.
- **Equal opportunity** -- This goal has been enunciated and enforced, not exclusively, but primarily, by interested parties outside the public education system--the courts and the federal government. Equal opportunity involves equal access to education regardless of race, sex, or handicap as well as the equalization of expenditures for students regardless of the property wealth of their taxing jurisdiction.
- **Profitable education-related business** -- Those who produce instructional materials and technology want to maintain and expand their commerce with the schools.

A NUMBER OF BASIC OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

These goals are reflected in a number of basic operational elements of the public education system. The elements are the wheels, gears, and levers that make the system work. Their quality can be affected through policy-making. Thus, proposals to reform public education in Minnesota should be directly or indirectly targeted at these elements.

- **Curriculum** -- This is what is taught, and includes lesson plans, textbooks, and other materials.

- **Pedagogy** -- This is how what is taught is taught, and includes teaching methods, use of time, and application of educational technology.
- **Extracurricular activities** -- These faculty-supervised activities include athletics; cheerleading; after-school theatre, band, and choir programs; school newspapers; declamation clubs; various recreational, educational, social, and political clubs; and social activities such as school-sponsored dances, proms, and other festivities.
- **Teachers** -- This is the central element of the system, and includes kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and special education teachers.
- **Administrators** -- This is an important element in two respects--for overall and day-to-day management of the schools as well as (at least potentially) for educational guidance for the teaching staff. Administrators include the superintendent, principals, assistant principals, and miscellaneous other administrative staff.
- **Other personnel** -- This is everyone else directly or indirectly involved in the school's operation, including secretaries, custodians, nurses, counselors, and coaches.
- **Institutional arrangements** -- These provide the context in which the curriculum, pedagogy, and personnel perform together. The institutional arrangements have physical, social, bureaucratic, and political dimensions.
- **Financial arrangements** -- The financing of the education system reflects decisions made at the state, local, and federal levels. Finance decisions determine the total level of spending, the governmental sources of the dollars, the types of taxes that will generate the funding, and the degree to which expenses will be financed with debt.

NINE DISTINCT TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

In his book, A Place Called School, John Goodlad suggests that "developing the capability to effect improvement is more important than effecting a specific change" (p. 282). The efficacy of reform depends in large part on recognizing the nature of the processes through which change in Minnesota's education system can occur. The nature of the present system reflects this complex set of processes and it is through these processes that efforts to improve Minnesota public education will succeed or fail. At least nine distinct decision-making processes are in operation.

- **Student participation, engagement, and cooperation** -- To a limited degree, students are directly involved in influencing the direction of the schools through their participation in student governing bodies, social and athletic clubs, school newspapers, and their involvement in school politics. More significant, however, is their contribution to the "cultural" atmosphere of the schools and the degree to which they are engaged in, and cooperate with, the academic and non-academic programs of the school and the level of student disruption, crime, and disharmony which may characterize the schools.
- **Direct parental involvement** -- To some degree, parents exert direct influence over the education of their children and the overall direction of the schools, through individual contact with school officials and the teachers of their children; selection of electives and school programs and, in some cases, particular schools; participation in parent/citizen advisory committees or local parent teacher associations; and through the selection of the communities in which they decide to live. The levels of involvement and influence vary depending on the particular parents, teachers, and school officials; the range of program choices available in the districts; the general level of parent and community interaction with the schools; and the financial and social ability of families to move their residences among districts.
- **Individual teacher entrepreneurship** -- Much of what happens in the schools, particularly in the classrooms, reflects individual entrepreneurship on the part of teachers. To some degree, they have professional autonomy in their own classrooms, despite other decision-making which affects the circumstances of teaching.
- **Decision-making within a school building** -- Many education decisions are made within individual schools through a process that is in part formal and hierarchical, in part informal and collegial, and in part involves individual and group bargaining.
- **Politics** -- In part, the system is governed by formal political processes. Elected local school boards, representing parents and taxpayers, set a wide range of district policies and, to some degree, guide the administrative staff of the district. At the state level, public education is a highly political issue. The legislature, responding to the public, the school districts, and special education interests, establish numerous policies affecting the schools.

- **Bureaucratic management** -- At the same time, public education is a hierarchical bureaucratic system, managed by administrators. With tenured staff, the make-up of the organization is relatively stable and not necessarily responsive to external pressures.
- **Collective negotiation** -- A number of key issues are resolved through, or affected by, the negotiation process of collective bargaining. These issues include not only teacher salaries and benefits, but the degree of management flexibility in hiring and firing and other personnel matters. Collective bargaining--because it directly affects the costs of teachers, who represent the major expenditure of the schools--indirectly impacts upon other spending decisions made by administrators and school boards. This process can also involve a wide variety of other issues affecting the management and operation of the schools.
- **Intergovernmental financial decision-making** -- Financial responsibility is shared among local districts and the state and federal governments. Finance decisions reflect the educational, tax, and spending goals of each level of governance. Each level is involved in the decision-making such that all levels are, to some degree, constrained by the financial decisions of the others.
- **Litigation** -- Public education is significantly affected by litigation and court decisions. Lawyers and judges play key roles in the ongoing development of educational policies regarding finance, desegregation, discrimination, and programs for special populations.

These nine processes are constrained by formal and informal sets of rules. Formal rules (regulations, mandates, and standards) are imposed by state and federal governments (often as conditions for receiving certain funding), by local school districts, and by the courts. Beyond these is an informal set of rules imposed by the social environment within individual schools and districts. These rules, reflecting the traditions, expectations, norms, values, and habits of the schools and districts, have a pervasive influence on the operation of schools. Formal and informal rules also affect the processes of change within the schools and are therefore important considerations when developing reform strategies.

By way of summary, this framework of interested groups, goals, operating elements, and decision-making processes is outlined in Table 15.

TABLE 15
POLICY FRAMEWORK: THE ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY
OF MINNESOTA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

<u>Interested Groups</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Operational Elements</u>	<u>Decision-Making Processes</u>
● Students ● Parents ● Local communities ● State citizenry ● Minnesota business community ● Teachers ● Administrators ● Local school boards ● State officials ● Federal officials and courts ● Colleges and universities ● Foundations ● Education-related businesses	● Academic achievement ● "Proper" socialization ● Surrogate parenting ● Opportunities for non-scholastic experience ● Accountability and responsiveness ● Cost abatement ● Improving teachers' jobs ● Efficient and orderly management ● Equal opportunity ● Profitable education-related business	● Curriculum ● Pedagogy ● Extracurricular activities ● Teachers ● Administrators ● Other personnel ● Institutional arrangements ● Financial arrangements	● Student participation, engagement, & cooperation ● Direct parental involvement ● Individual teacher entrepreneurship ● Decision-making within a school building ● Politics ● Bureaucratic management ● Collective negotiation ● Intergovernmental financial decision-making ● Litigation

IMPLICATIONS FOR REFORM

Given this description of the anatomy and physiology of Minnesota's public education system several observations can be made. The complexity of the system helps to explain why public education is often seen as adapting primarily in incremental rather than fundamental ways. Some reform advocates argue that fundamental changes are needed to improve Minnesota's public education system. This is a difficult task given the myriad of interested groups simultaneously pursuing a variety of goals through several process avenues. This is not to say that basic changes in the system are not urgently needed, only that to foster such changes requires the explicit exclusion of some of those currently influencing the system and the deemphasis or elimination of some of the goals driving the current system.

Perhaps reflecting frustration about the incremental nature of changes in public education, many reformers view the current system as rigid and conservative or those within it ("the educational establishment") as inherently (self-interestedly) disinterested in reform. This, they say, has resulted in an erosion of the quality of education and its gradual obsolescence, with no real incentives for the system to change. There is no question that how the system operates--with its complex of interested groups, multiple goals, various operational elements, and several decision-making processes--has a lot to do with its quality. What is not so clear is whether further pressures on the system in the form of incentives or regulations will make a difference. Indeed, this description of the system suggests that there are currently many pressures for ongoing change but that these come from divergent sources with sometimes contradictory goals.

Moreover, it seems logical that schools within such a system will be characterized by great diversity, on the one hand, and a stunning degree of similarity, on the other. The diversity will reflect variations in local political processes, individual teacher entrepreneurship, and the particular students of the schools and their parents, while the similarities will reflect the bureaucratic processes, financial systems, formal rules, and the instructional materials widely used by schools.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC EDUCATION DEBATE

How much of the current educational debate reflects an understanding of the nature of the system? An examination of the major reports and proposals reveals that the current Minnesota debate, with its various diagnoses and its numerous reform ideas--recognizes only a portion of the anatomy and physiology of Minnesota's public education system. Aspects of the system which are given significant attention appear in ALL CAPS in Table 16.

TABLE 16

HOW MINNESOTA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION DEBATE EMPHASIZES CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE SYSTEM

Interested Groups	Goals	Operational Elements	Decision-Making Processes
• Students • PARENTS • LOCAL COMMUNITIES • STATE CITIZENRY • MN BUSINESS COMMUNITY • TEACHERS • ADMINISTRATORS • Local school boards • STATE OFFICIALS • Federal officials and courts • COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES • Foundations • Education-related businesses	• ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT • "Proper" socialization • Surrogate parenting • Opportunities for non-scholastic experience • ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS • COST ABATEMENT • IMPROVING TEACHERS' JOBS • EFFICIENT AND ORDERLY MANAGEMENT • Equal opportunity • Profitable education-related business	• CURRICULUM • PEDAGOGY • Extracurricular activities • TEACHERS • ADMINISTRATORS • Other personnel • INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS • Financial arrangements	• Student participation, engagement, & cooperation • DIRECT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT • Individual teacher entrepreneurship • DECISION-MAKING WITHIN A SCHOOL BUILDING • Politics • Bureaucratic management • Collective negotiation • Intergovernmental financial decision-making • Litigation

While the interests of parents, local communities, the state citizenry, business community, teachers and administrators, state officials, and colleges and universities are recognized, some notable omissions exist. While the interests of students are implicit in much of the debate, there is virtually no discussion of their perspectives about the system. Indeed, the only attention given their concerns is in the survey work conducted by the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and Research. That work reveals significant findings about students' dissatisfaction with Minnesota's high schools and yet receives only mention in the Minnesota Business Partnership's study and Joe Nathan's Free to Teach but no mention in any other significant study or proposal.

The lack of discussion about Minnesota's 436 school boards ignores a major party in the development of public education policy and misses one key potential action point for reform. Similarly, ignoring the significant role previously played by the federal government and the courts leaves a major gap in understanding why the system looks as it does and again misses other key potential reform agents. Foundations, too have influenced the system and could again.

Ignoring the critical role played by education-related businesses in developing textbooks and other curriculum (a subject of much criticism in some of the national literature) omits a key element that should be a part of the diagnosis of the problems within the system.

With respect to goals, most of the Minnesota debate focuses on academic achievement, accountability and responsiveness, cost abatement, and efficient and orderly management. This seems to reflect the high degree of publicity about declining student performance on college admission tests and widespread concern about high state taxes and the Minnesota business climate. To a lesser degree, improving teachers' jobs has been placed on the table for discussion, not surprising given teachers' key role in the system.

What is puzzling is the lack of attention to the three goals that relate to the non-academic aspects of child development in which the schools play a critical role. Serving the goals of socialization, surrogate parenting, and opportunities for non-scholastic experience are public school activities which are interwoven with programs to achieve academic development. Also notable among the omissions is the failure to address equity issues as they manifest themselves today. It is as if those had been settled at an earlier time despite evidence to the contrary.

Most of the key operational elements recognized in the Minnesota debate, are identified as sources of problems and are the focus of reform strategies. They are curriculum, pedagogy, teachers, administrators, and institutional arrangements.

The most significant omission here is the minimal discussion of financial arrangements except as a mechanical aspect of some proposals to foster parent choice. Critical questions about the governmental levels of funding and the types of taxes to be employed in funding the system and its reform are not discussed except for some largely technical changes in education finance proposed by the governor to simplify state-local relations and the property tax system. While the level of Minnesota public education funding is mentioned in a few reports, the suggestions for expanding funding are discussed delicately or in general terms.

The current debate does not reflect a full recognition of the complexity of decision-making in the system. While several of the nine processes are implicitly recognized (that politics is how reform occurs, that bureaucrats manage parts of the system, and that teachers have some entrepreneurial autonomy), by and large only two of the processes attract major attention. These are parental involvement and decision-making within a school building. Moreover, this aspect of the debate is oversimplified, seeming to ignore that what the schools are today is a direct reflection of the combined effect of all of these processes operating simultaneously.

Understanding this is critically important in accurately diagnosing the causes of current problems with the system. In addition, reform, if it is to be successful in fostering change, must recognize the current decision-making structure and identify ways to use that structure for implementing reform, or suggest alterations in those processes themselves in order to achieve improvement.

VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

1. There is a major debate in Minnesota about the quality of its public schools involving numerous and varied concerns. The central concerns, reflected in various proposals, are academic "excellence" and student performance, system accountability and responsiveness, and efficiency and cost-effectiveness of school services. These concerns and proposals largely reflect a vast national literature and to a much lesser degree Minnesota research, analysis, and advocacy. They also reflect a variety of presumptions about what is most important among the goals of public education. In some cases, the priorities of chosen goals are in conflict or reflect long-standing dilemmas about the best way to provide public education in view of its multiple purposes.

Some concerns which in previous times were key elements of education reform are given little emphasis in the current Minnesota debate and are not prominent among the proposals. Notable among these omissions are improving access to education for special populations, minimizing fiscal and programmatic disparities among school districts, and expanding the financial resources of the schools.

2. A review of the development of Minnesota's K-12 education system seems to indicate that several trends have been prevalent throughout time: a tradition of local control, expanding state supervision, concern about fiscal disparity and equity, and support for non-public schools.
3. During the 1970s and early 1980s Minnesota's public education system contracted significantly as a result of demographic, political, and economic trends:
 - Minnesota experienced a decrease in public school enrollments greater than that of the nation.
 - Minnesota public schools were hit hard by fiscal constraints in the early 1980s, the result of the state's financial crisis and, to a lesser degree, changing federal policies.
 - The costs of providing education grew due primarily to general inflation, as well as increasing costs of the teaching staff, growth in special education, and other responsibilities. New technology and curriculum and lower use of

associated school facilities and programs because of declining enrollments may also have contributed to these costs.

4. The circumstances causing Minnesota's public education system to contract in the 1970s and early 1980s have had significant impact on the system:

- Minnesota's total K-12 educational expenditures dropped 16.5 percent in real dollars from 1972-73 to 1982-83. This was a more substantial decline than that of most other states, including all midwestern states, and is reflected in considerable slippage in Minnesota's expenditure rankings with other states. Even measured in per pupil expenditures in constant dollars (to account for enrollment decline), Minnesota's 21.8 percent increase during the period was below the national average and represents a smaller increase than all other midwestern states. In addition, expenditures for Minnesota elementary and secondary education have become a much smaller portion of the state budget, having dropped from 40 percent to 27 percent of the state's budget between 1971-73 and 1983-85.
- Minnesota experienced a net loss of about 5,000 licensed staff between 1973-74 and 1982-83 reflecting declining enrollments and, in the early 1980s, state cutbacks associated with the state's financial crisis. Only five states lost a greater proportion of their teachers during the period 1972-73 to 1982-83.
- With tenure and seniority protections in place, staff reductions have resulted in hiring fewer new teachers, laying off new teachers first, and filling fewer retirement-created openings. As a result, the median age of Minnesota's licensed staff increased from 35.4 in 1973-74 to 41.5 in 1982-83. Those remaining in the system have more education and experience and are thus entitled to higher salaries that have, in turn, increased the costs of operating the system.
- Salary increases gained by Minnesota teachers during the 1970s and early 1980s were not sufficient to keep up with inflation, diminishing their purchasing power by 7 percent between 1972-73 and 1982-83. These increases, while higher than for teachers in most states, were also less than the increase in Minnesota's personal income during the period.
- In the early 1980s local school district fund balances dropped significantly in at least half of the state's districts.

- The number of schools in Minnesota declined by 18 percent between 1971-72 and 1982-83 in direct response to declining enrollments. However, in 1982-83 a dramatic increase in school closings occurred as districts were forced to cope with state aid reductions.

5. In the 1970s and early 1980s Minnesota schools were asked to take on substantial additional responsibilities despite the contraction they were experiencing. During this period schools were required to foster racial integration, eliminate sex discrimination, and improve access for the handicapped. The education finance system was overhauled in an attempt to reduce property taxes and minimize financial disparities among districts, thereby creating more equal educational opportunities for all Minnesota children.

Schools also broadened the age group they serve through the creation and subsequent expansion of community education programs and the establishment of early childhood and family education. In addition, schools were asked to provide special programs for gifted and talented children. All of these changes increased the schools' responsibilities and expanded the role of public education in Minnesota life.

6. The lives of Minnesota's student population are dramatically different from those of their parents or possibly even their older siblings:

- Minnesota children live in families that have changed dramatically. Increasingly, they come from homes in which both parents work (almost 60 percent of Minnesota families), or from homes where there is only one parent, due to a divorce, or from homes where several families are blended, due to a remarriage.
- Use of, and exposure to, alcohol and drugs is common among Minnesota school children, particularly high schoolers.
- More children are becoming involved in sexual activity at earlier ages than in the past. Nationally, the average age at the time of first sexual experience is sixteen and by the time children are nineteen only one-fifth of the males and one-third of the females have not had intercourse.
- Children read less and watch television more. In fact, the average United States student spends more time watching television than in school.
- Seventy percent of Minnesota's sixteen and seventeen year olds work fifteen to twenty hours a week during the school year. This increase in working has

made some youth "prematurely affluent" and created a significant distraction from school involvement.

- Minnesota teachers report significant changes in the attitudes of school-age youth. Among these changes, they see today's elementary students as more aware and knowledgeable than their counterparts of ten to twenty years ago and they see today's secondary students as less intellectually curious and less inquisitive than the earlier students. Teachers also observe that both elementary and secondary students are more assertive, expressive, self-assured, and more likely to challenge authority and criticize school than they were ten or twenty years ago. They say that today's students have a strong need to be entertained and expect immediate gratification for personal and educational desires, they have shorter attention spans, and they have an insatiable need for attention. Students are less willing to put forth effort to learn and are motivated more by external rather than internal rewards than the earlier students, teachers report.
- Student misbehavior is perceived as the biggest problem in United States elementary, junior high, and high schools by parents, teachers, and students alike. These problems reflect factors primarily outside, rather than inside the schools, such as the disruption of families and the level of social control exerted by parents.

7. One of the critical challenges facing Minnesota public education is the improvement of the professional status and working conditions of Minnesota teachers, whose circumstances are very similar to teachers elsewhere in the nation. Fifty-eight percent of Minnesota's teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs because of their pay and the amount of work they do, the chances for advancement, the way school policies are put into place, and the lack of praise they get for doing the job. These circumstances may partially explain the 32 percent decline in the number of Minnesota high school juniors expressing interest in becoming teachers between 1973-74 and 1983-84.
8. Significant financial disparities among Minnesota's school districts continue to exist despite school finance reform in the early 1970s to deal with this problem. The levels of disparity in per pupil revenues and expenditures in the early 1980s remained virtually the same as those that existed in the early 1970s when the state's school finance system was overhauled in the face of a constitutional court challenge. Modifications made in the finance system in recent years have worked to

counteract the changes made in the early 1970s, so that the system now relies increasingly on local property taxes.

9. There is currently a significant state effort to promote the adoption of new educational technology and improve school effectiveness, challenging Minnesota school districts to adopt state-of-the-art technology and new organizational and pedagogical methods. As a part of these efforts, significant demonstration work is underway at technology demonstration sites and school effectiveness pilot sites throughout the state.
10. While national polls indicate a significant level of public dissatisfaction with public education, Minnesotans are much more positive about their schools and generally have not seen a deterioration in their quality during the last decade. In fact, 79 percent of Minnesotans give the state's public schools a favorable rating of "excellent" or "good." More than two-thirds think the quality of Minnesota schools is better than or the same as it was ten years ago.
11. Despite strong public confidence in Minnesota schools, Minnesota public education is challenged by a political climate influenced by the "Excellence Movement," the advocates for public support of private schools, the "New Right" criticisms and censorship, and the "Tax Limitation Movement."
12. Minnesota public education is an extremely complex system comprised of numerous interested parties, multiple--sometimes conflicting--goals, eight basic operational elements, and nine distinct types of decision-making processes. This helps to explain why public education is often seen as adapting primarily in incremental rather than fundamental ways. Achieving fundamental reform is a difficult task given the myriad of interested parties simultaneously pursuing a variety of goals through several process avenues. Such reform would require the explicit exclusion of some of those currently influencing the system and the deemphasis or elimination of some of the goals driving the current system.
13. Significant aspects of Minnesota's public education are not addressed in the current debate, despite a variety of diagnoses and numerous reform ideas. Notable omissions include:
 - Failure to explicitly recognize the key interests held by students in the system and their critical role in the effectiveness of school operations and in achieving meaningful reform.
 - Lack of discussion about Minnesota's 436 school boards and their role in developing public education policy and in achieving reform.

- Inattention to three non-academic goals of the education system in which schools play a critical role--socialization, surrogate parenting, and opportunities for non-scholastic experience. (The schools' performance in these areas also significantly affects students' academic performance.)
- Minimal discussion of the financial arrangements of public education, including critical questions about the governmental levels of funding and types of taxes to be employed.
- Oversimplification of the decision-making processes involved in the education system. Generally, only two of the nine processes (direct parental involvement and decision-making within a school building) attract major attention in the debate, suggesting that there is little understanding that what the schools are today is a direct reflection of the combined effect of all nine processes operating simultaneously.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has been prepared in the hope that its examination of Minnesota's public education system will contribute to the important debate now underway to improve the quality of Minnesota's public schools and prepare them for the future. In the study, the major concerns and proposals comprising the current ferment over K-12 public education in Minnesota have been identified and summarized. The study has also attempted to delineate from existing data what is known about the state's public education system and to use that information in examining the concerns raised in the Minnesota discussion. Data were gathered in various ways including an examination of the major studies analyzing various aspects of Minnesota's K-12 system and an analysis and synthesis of existing data on Minnesota schools and students. In addition, information was collected that would shed light on the historical underpinnings of the system and the demographic, economic, social and political trends affecting Minnesota public education.

Growing out of the study are a number of conclusions about the current discussion of public education in Minnesota and the degree to which it reflects the picture of public education that emerges from the Minnesota data. The study revealed several shortcomings in the discussion given what we know about Minnesota public education. In seeking to assure that the children of Minnesota's future receive a better education than that provided currently or in the past, we believe that it is important to clarify and carefully explicate our knowledge as an essential first step in identifying problems and formulating meaningful strategies for change. These conclusions are presented in that spirit.

Major Issues In The Current Debate

Several conclusions were made concerning the major issues characterizing the current discussion on K-12 public education in Minnesota, given what we know from available data:

1. The Minnesota discussion is fueled by a widespread perception that Minnesotans are dissatisfied with their public education system, believing that the quality of the schools has deteriorated in recent years. Yet, despite all the public attention focused on Minnesota public education and the frequent criticism of the schools by some reform advocates, the vast majority of Minnesotans rate their schools highly. In a survey conducted for this project by the University's Center for Social Research (Craig and Pederson 1985), 79 percent of a statewide sample rated Minnesota schools as "good" or "excellent," a far more favorable rating than Americans give the schools in the nation as a whole. And, less than one-third of the sample said Minnesota's schools are worse than they were ten years ago. Critics of public education can question whether Minnesotans really know the condition the schools are in, but the assertion made by some that there is a groundswell of dissatisfaction among the citizens with their schools is not supported by the data.
2. A major problem often cited in the Minnesota debate is the performance of Minnesota students on standardized achievement tests. However, it is not possible to conclude from existing data that significant problems in student performance do or do not exist in Minnesota. Nor is it possible to conclude that any performance deficiencies that can be measured are the result of a decline in the quality of the state's public schools. Much of the concern about student performance has resulted from a study of this matter by Berman, Weiler Associates, a consultant to the Minnesota Business Partnership. A review of that study prepared as a part of this project raises serious questions about the findings of the Berman, Weiler study (Duren and Peek 1984). Close reading of the study, particularly Berman, Weiler's extensive evaluation of the limitations of the existing data on Minnesota student performance, indicates that, unfortunately, it is impossible to make definitive conclusions about student performance in Minnesota. In addition, the CURA/College of Education review indicates that if any deficiencies do exist they may be related to forces external to the schools, such as those noted, but not adequately discussed in the Berman, Weiler study, and outlined in specific detail in Chapter IV of this report. What is needed are other, more reliable measures of student performance as well as means for determining the impact of those external forces on student performance and school quality.

3. The current debate often contains the assertion that the costs of Minnesota's public education system have grown inordinately in recent years and that Minnesotans are getting less while paying more for public education. In fact, Minnesota's K-12 system has experienced more than a decade of contraction caused by inflation and fiscal constraints imposed primarily by state government, as well as declining enrollments. The results include a real decline in expenditures and teacher salaries, significant staff layoffs, and the closing of schools. Even using the most optimistic measure of educational financial effort--per pupil expenditures--Minnesota's increase in constant dollars was 24 percent below the national average. Forty-two states had greater increases. At the same time Minnesota schools have assumed substantial new responsibilities, making the claim that the schools are doing less with more particularly ironic.

There appears to be a widespread belief that Minnesota is strongly supportive of K-12 education and is a leader among the states in educational spending. While Minnesota still spends more on public education than most other states, its expenditure ranking among states has dropped significantly during the past decade. This seems to represent a changing state government commitment to K-12 public education, reflected in the substantial decline over the past decade in the portion of the state budget that goes to education and in the corresponding increase in the local share of school funding. It is also clear that when the state experienced its financial crisis in the early 1980s it balanced its budget in large measure by reducing its financial commitment to the schools. All of this suggests that Minnesota's reputation as a big spender on education is not as deserved as it once was.

More importantly, the past decade and a half of contraction, particularly that related to the state's financial crisis, presents a serious policy challenge to Minnesota now. What has been the impact of this trend on the quality of public education, on a system which has been disrupted at the local level by state aid cutbacks causing staff reductions, service retrenchments, closed schools, property tax hikes, and diminishing fund balances?

4. A major component of the Minnesota educational debate focuses on the organizational structures of public schools. The assumption seems to be that organizational and/or structural change will result in improved educational quality, although evidence supporting this assumption, particularly from Minnesota, is scarce. Furthermore, the proposals for organizational change significantly oversimplify the total system of governance that currently affects public education. Four basic approaches for change appear in the debate, with emphasis varying

among the proposals. These are **local district control**, the emphasis of the current system; **local control at the building level**, recognized to some degree in the current system; **state control**, which has played an increasingly important role in the current system; and **marketplace choice for parents (and students)**, a minor part of the current system. A number of structural reforms have been proposed to alter the current system of governance, including increased state regulation and oversight, local school-based management, and parent and student choice through educational vouchers. Two general observations should be made about this aspect of the Minnesota debate.

First, the evidence for assuming that organizational change in schools results in improved quality and/or reduced costs is not definitive, although there is some indication that positive results occur in increased "school-based management" situations. The debate across the nation on increasing or decreasing the amount of state control vis a vis local district control has been and remains inconclusive. Experience with greater parent-student choice systems is quite limited, although Minneapolis is now developing data on its experience with an expanded choice model. Proposals that urge more radical restructuring of the system are based on a critique of bureaucratic institutions in general, which, the proponents argue, the public schools have become. A reorganization of schools is proposed based on the belief that an educational structure devised on a competitive marketplace model will improve quality and reduce costs.

Second, most proposals for structural change oversimplify the total system of governance for Minnesota's public education system, described earlier in this study, including those not formally part of the governance system. In particular, they do not consider:

- student participation, engagement and cooperation;
- individual entrepreneurship of teachers in the classroom;
- formal political processes, particularly the role of school boards;
- bureaucratic management of administrators;
- collective negotiation;
- intergovernmental financial decision-making; and
- litigation.

The failure to fully recognize the nature of decision-making in the system combined with reliance on assumptions and a general national literature rather than Minnesota evidence indicates that these restructuring proposals are best viewed as trial responses to a perceived rather than documented set of problems.

5. Much of the discussion of Minnesota public education is not linked to the existing data base on Minnesota public education, nor does the discussion significantly add to that data base. Instead, it tends to rely on national reports and research which may or may not be relevant to the Minnesota case. Unfortunately, many reports and analyses of education, both nationally and in Minnesota, are based on assumptions or anecdotal evidence rather than documented research. As a result, there continue to be major gaps in research and data analysis which could provide important answers to the myriad of concerns raised about Minnesota schools. Among the exceptions in Minnesota are the studies of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Berman, Weiler Associates' study of costs of public education in Minnesota, the Minnesota Youth Polls of the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and Research, and the various reports of the Minnesota Department of Education's Education Statistics Division. (The most notable exception at the national level is John Goodlad's A Place Called School.)

Consequently, the important distinction between the educational expert/researcher and educational reform advocate has been blurred, creating public confusion about what is fact and what is assumption and what knowledge base lies behind various reform proposals.

Major Issues Not Adequately Addressed in the Current Debate

This study has revealed several issues which have not been adequately addressed in the current Minnesota debate. Following are several conclusions regarding these based on the discussion contained in this report:

6. The current debate on public education in Minnesota virtually ignores one of the major problems facing Minnesota's public schools, the changing Minnesota student. A wide range of social changes has dramatically altered children's personal, family, and social circumstances. These have important implications for Minnesota schools. It is important to ask whether some of these social changes--particularly the dramatically altered family arrangements, increased exposure to alcohol, drugs and sex, and changes in students' attitudes--have made many children more difficult to teach. Certainly, Minnesota teachers have reported this to be the case. Given these circumstances, is it so surprising that national research indicates that parents, teachers, and students all see student misbehavior as the major problem in the schools? But it isn't just that the new student may create more problems for the schools. Aren't the schools being asked to take on more parental responsibility for

these children--to interest them in learning, if that interest has not been fostered elsewhere, and to discipline them, if for no other reason than to keep order in the classroom and school?

The omission of this problem in the Minnesota debate on education is significant for two reasons. First, in assessing the quality of the schools and identifying deficiencies, the roles students play in affecting the quality of schooling and the school environment are not recognized. This leaves the debate with the presumption that the problems and their solutions are educational and school-based rather than social and non-school based or a combination of both. Some might ask whether this is just "blaming the victim" for educational deficiencies, but recognizing the changing student does raise policy questions about where the problems and solutions actually lie.

Second, and reflecting what has been said here, among the proposals for reform of Minnesota's schools, none addresses the critical problem of the changing student, even though whatever problems are brought into the schools by children will affect the success of any reform proposal. Will "more time on task" really help a student who is unmotivated? What is the likelihood of developing higher level thinking skills with a child who is chemically dependent? How will requiring student competency tests help the child distracted by problems at home? Will parents whose involvement with the schools is limited by work schedules or other circumstances meaningfully exercise choice in determining a school for their child? What assurance is there that additional financial or other inputs into the schools will make a difference if they are not specifically earmarked to address problems associated with the changing student?

Perhaps reforms should be designed specifically to improve the ability of schools to cope with the changing student. There may be things the schools can do better to offset the negative consequences for children of some of these social changes. Or, schools may also need more effective ways to handle a student body which for these reasons, is difficult to teach.

7. Another critical problem facing Minnesota public education, recognized, but not fully explored in the debate, is the current professional status and working conditions of teachers. While many recognize the need to improve the teacher's lot (among them the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Governor's Commission on Education for Economic Growth and the Minnesota Education Association) few appear ready to consider any financial consequences required to make improvement possible. There may be salaries to raise, teaching assistants to hire, inservice

programs to provide, contracts and responsibilities to extend, facilities to improve, equipment to buy, and more--all of which cost money. Given the current political climate against taxes and additional government spending, many reform advocates seem reluctant to propose solutions to the teacher professional problem if it creates a significant departure from the status quo in taxation and spending levels.

A related problem is that reformers interested in improving the teaching profession must consider who will implement the reforms as well as pay for them, state government or local districts? If the legislature wants improvement how will it assure that in every district teachers salaries are raised, assistants are hired, in-service programs are established, and more teacher preparation time is provided? If local districts want to institute these reforms can they realistically be expected to pay for them through additional local property taxes?

8. Another major omission of the current Minnesota debate is the lack of discussion of issues related to equal educational opportunity, the central element of the last great education reform movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. While the concern about "access" and "equity" is often mentioned, there is virtually no attention paid to determining the current status of equal educational opportunity in Minnesota or making improvements in this area, despite evidence that these problems continue to exist in the state. On the one hand, the emphasis on other aspects of public education may be seen as a broadening of the equity reform focus of the past. But on the other hand, its virtual non-existence as a political issue is puzzling especially given the schools' ongoing responsibility to maintain school desegregation, eliminate sex discrimination, and provide special education. Of particular importance is the continuing presence of significant financial disparities among the state's school districts, disparities which can have important implications for educational opportunity in Minnesota.
9. The current educational debate in Minnesota emphasizes student academic achievement as the goal of public education. Without question that is a central goal for most, perhaps the primary goal of the system, and it will be at the heart of any considerations of reform. However, in addition to academic achievement, there are other, non-academic goals that are also central to public education and around which much of what happens in the schools revolve. Despite their importance, they are virtually ignored in the current debate, an omission affecting assessments of school quality and the efficacy of some reform strategies. These non-academic goals are proper socialization, surrogate parenting, and opportunities for non-scholastic experience. Reflecting these goals are numerous school activities

including informal and formal student counseling; ongoing student disciplinary action; special education; extracurricular activities; and regular classes in health, sex education, drug education, drivers education, and other areas. These activities give the school many more dimensions than just those of an academic learning center.

The failure to fully recognize the non-academic goals of public education has an important implication for school reform. The assessments of the quality of Minnesota public education and the prescribed reforms ignore a critically important aspect of what the schools do, and an aspect which may need attention given what the data show about the changing Minnesota student. Responding to the problems of the changing student will involve strategies related to the non-academic aspects of public education. Indeed it is possible that, given the changing student, academic improvement can be achieved only through strategies associated with the non-academic activities of the system.

* * *

It is in Minnesota's tradition continually to reexamine and reform its public institutions and there are few institutions where this is as important a task as with the public education system. This makes the current debate about the schools critically important to the future of the state and its citizens. Therefore, it is essential that the debate be based on a realistic assessment of the condition of the system and the challenges it faces now and in the years to come. Similarly, ongoing reform must reflect careful consideration of actual deficiencies and emerging problems and a clear understanding of the possible implications of particular reforms. The criticisms of the current debate outlined here are intended, not to encourage complacency about the schools, but rather to make a constructive contribution to the current efforts to make Minnesota's schools better than they have ever been.

APPENDIX A
A PARTIAL CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

- 1849 Territorial legislature enacted the first law pertaining to education.
- 1851 County commissioners allowed to establish smaller school districts, disregarding formerly used township lines, and facilitating the establishment of the "neighborhood common school."
- 1851 Legislation enacted establishing University of Minnesota. The University would not function in earnest until after its reorganization in 1868.
- 1854 First Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed. Salary was \$100 per year.
- 1857 Legislation passed (at request of several small cities and townships) allowing the establishment of special school districts. This gave districts so chartered a degree of independence not available to other districts.
- 1858 Minnesota became a state. Constitution had several clauses relating to the establishment of public schools. Townships designated as local unit of organization.
- 1858 State constitution provided for a permanent school fund to be derived from the sale of lands by the United States for the use of schools within each township, the sale of swamp land, and other cash and investments. Interest from this fund was to be distributed according to the number of school age children in the district.
- 1858 Legislation passed authorizing the establishment of three normal schools (teachers' colleges). First normal school to open was in Winona in 1860.
- 1860 Minnesota State Teachers Association established.
- 1861 Legislation passed stipulating that every township would be a school district.
- 1861 Uniform textbook legislation passed. Act was amended in 1877 and 1881.
- 1862 Law passed establishing a Permanent School Fund as called for in the constitution.
- 1862 Legislation adopted that firmly established the "neighborhood plan" or district system of public schools in Minnesota.
- 1865 Legislation passed granting incorporated cities, towns, and villages the right to establish independent school districts.
- 1870 Seventeen communities recorded having high school classes, most as adjunct to common schools.
- 1870 Superintendent of Public Instruction Horace B. Wilson, appointed a special committee to plan a course of study for the high school ("The People's College").

- 1872 First course of study for high school issued by the superintendent of public instruction.
- 1877 Minnesota school fund equaled \$3.4 million, the fifth largest school fund in the United States.
- 1877 Minnesota constitution amended to forbid public support of sectarian schools.
- 1878 First law passed recognizing the need for high school. This law:
- appropriated \$400 annually to each high school maintaining the minimum course of study; and
 - to enforce the regulations, established a high school board consisting of the superintendent of public instruction, the president of the University of Minnesota, and a third person appointed by the governor.
- 1881 Law enacted requiring instruction in, among other subjects, morality. Law revised in 1905.
- 1885 Compulsory attendance law required every parent or guardian of a child between the ages of 8 and 18 to send the child to a public or private school for twelve weeks each year.
- 1885 Two steps were made toward state financial aid to schools:
- funds to schools were no longer distributed according to census of school age children in district but according to number of pupils actually in attendance; and
 - the legislature proposed a constitutional amendment (ratified in 1887) authorizing loans from the permanent fund for county and school buildings.
- 1887 State property law for support of schools enacted.
- 1887 Melrose Incident: the incident involved Catholics gaining control of school district, lowering taxes, and decreasing the number of months the school met. Compromise was eventually reached.
- 1891 Faribault Incident: the incident involved the public school being persuaded to pay for the Catholic school when the church declared it could not afford to operate its own school. After prolonged public protest and the threat of transferring Catholic teachers to the public school and public school teachers to the Catholic school, the financial arrangement was terminated and the church again paid for its own school.
- 1891 Stillwater Incident: same as Faribault. Also terminated by mutual agreement.
- 1892 Constitutional amendment ratified which prohibited further charters for special school districts.
- 1897 Avon Conflict: this involved a Protestant minority and Catholic majority. Suit brought by minority asking that prayer and religious instruction be discontinued. Court ruled for the minority.
- 1899 Law passed to strengthen compulsory attendance. The law:
- authorized school boards in cities and large villages to appoint truant officers with power to arrest truants, take them to school, and file

complaints against their parents or guardians (most Minnesota children at this time lived in rural areas); and

- made no arrangements for statewide enforcement.

- 1899 Law set down the first meaningful requirements for preparation of teachers. The law required satisfactory completion of an examination prepared by the Office of Public Instruction. Passing teachers were issued one of three certificates depending on academic and professional preparation.
- 1900 Approximately 8,000 school districts existed at this time in Minnesota.
- 1901 Legislation passed authorizing kindergarten.
- 1901 Legislation passed enabling school consolidation. Amendments would be made in 1903 and 1905.
- 1904 Minnesota attorney general ruled that the wearing of religious garb in public schools was unconstitutional.
- 1905 Funds appropriated to schools by legislature for adult "Americanization" classes.
- 1909 Putnam Act passed creating vocational and prevocational training in the schools. Similar legislation, the Benson-Lee Act, was passed in 1911.
- 1911 Law passed offering financial incentives to newly consolidated districts. These districts were to be given:
- one-fourth of the cost of erecting a building;
 - annual aid up to \$1,500 a year if school met eight months of the year; and
 - transportation assistance for pupils living long distances from the school building.
- 1911 Compulsory attendance law revised. Additional revisions were made in 1919, 1923, and 1941.
- 1912 Minnesota Education Association proposed a committee to study the state school situation and draft new school codes. This commission would be formed by the legislature in 1913. Though a report would be issued in 1914, it would not be acted on by the legislature until 1919.
- 1913 Approximately 7,900 school districts existed in Minnesota.
- 1913 Legislation passed calling for the creation of a division of building directed by a commissioner of building in the Office of Public Instruction and authorized to prescribe rules for erection, enlargement, and change of school buildings.
- 1913 Thirty-six weeks of professional courses made minimum requirement for teachers to receive new first grade teaching certificate.
- 1914 A legislative commission (called for by the Minnesota Education Association in 1912) issued its report recommending the creation of a board of education that would consolidate the responsibilities held by the Office of Public Instruction, the High School Board, the Normal School Board, the State Library Commission, and the Board for Special Schools for Deaf and Blind. Legislative action was delayed until 1919.

- 1915 Legislation passed and aid provided for special classes for handicapped children including the deaf, blind, mentally handicapped, and speech impaired. Crippled children added in 1917.
- 1915 Statute passed providing for reimbursement aid for student transportation and room and board when it was necessary so that they could attend school. Aid of up to \$2,000 per year went to consolidated districts.
- 1919 State Board of Education established, including all but the normal schools and the University of Minnesota.
- 1919 James M. McConnell appointed first commissioner of education. McConnell would serve until 1933.
- 1921 First elementary course of study distributed statewide by the State Board of Education.
- 1920 High school graduation required for entrance into state normal school.
- 1921 Adult evening classes authorized.
- 1921 Six state normal schools became teacher colleges.
- 1923 Law passed allowing for all the unorganized land in a county (i.e. land not in a school district) to be considered a school district.
- 1923 Physical education made compulsory in Minnesota schools.
- 1929 Minnesota Board of Education granted sole authority to grant teacher certificates.
- 1929 Legislation passed authorizing the development of county-wide school districts.
- 1936 Teacher organizations from the University of Minnesota and the cities of St. Paul, Minneapolis, International Falls, Duluth, and Mankato were among those uniting to form the Minnesota State Federation of Teachers (which later became the Minnesota Federation of Teachers).
- 1937 School districts allowed to develop recreation programs.
- 1943 Supervision of school lunch program transferred from Department of Welfare to Department of Education.
- 1944 Safety education made a responsibility of schools by statute.
- 1945 Area Vocational and Technical Institutes authorized by legislation.
- 1947 Approximately 7,679 school districts existed in Minnesota.
- 1947 Law enacted providing for the appointment by the State Board of Education of a state advisory commission on school reorganization.
- 1947 Schools authorized to provide drivers education.
- 1947 County survey committees authorized by the legislature.

- 1947 "Weighted pupil units" used for the first time to determine the allocation of school funds.
- 1947 Law established State Advisory Committee on School District Reorganization and set up county study committees to reduce number of school districts.
- 1955 Law provided \$200 income tax deduction per child for tuition and other expenses of parents sending their children to both public and private schools.
- 1955 Equalization Review Committee established.
- 1957 Interim Commission on Handicapped Children established. Major legislation enacted later in the year as a result of commission's report.
- 1957 Gifted and talented legislation passed by the state.
- 1957 The Minnesota Advisory Commission on Handicapped Children established and charged with advising the state concerning issues affecting the handicapped. Law made the education of the handicapped a mandatory responsibility of school districts.
- 1957 Law established Foundation Program Aid; flat grants also continued.
- 1958 Minnesota Adult Education Act passed.
- 1962 The bachelors degree made the minimum requirement for teachers in elementary schools.
- 1963 First mandatory reorganization legislation enacted. The legislation was strengthened in 1967.
- 1965 1,742 school districts existed in Minnesota.
- 1967 Meet and Confer Act was passed creating a framework for formal discussions between teachers and school boards.
- 1967 Minnesota State Act Against Discrimination amended to include schools.
- 1967 State issues a statement on racial imbalance and discrimination in schools.
- 1967 Tax Reform and Relief Act passed.
- 1967 School district reorganization law required all Minnesota school districts to have both elementary and secondary schools.
- 1967 Law established Professional Teacher Practices Commission in an advisory capacity to State Board of Education.
- 1969 State discontinued issuing life-time teacher certificates.
- 1969 Minnesota Transportation of School Children Act passed. Act provided bus transportation for all school children without regard to type of school attended. The law's constitutionality hinged on the "child benefit theory" approved by the Supreme Court.

- 1969 Committee for Integrated Education, a self-appointed Minneapolis-based organization, is formed.
- 1970 State Board of Education adopted voluntary guidelines for racial desegregation.
- 1971 Council on Quality of Education established.
- 1971 Community School Law passed.
- 1971 Public Employment Labor Relations Act passed. Act was significantly changed by amendments in 1973 and 1980.
- 1971 Minnesota Tax Credit Bill enacted. Bill declared unconstitutional in State Supreme Court in 1974. U.S. Supreme Court refused hearing in 1975.
- 1971 Minnesota Omnibus Tax Bill enacted.
- 1972 NAACP and Committee for Integrated Education sue Minneapolis School Board over discrimination in schools.
- 1972 Minneapolis School District put under U.S. District Court order to desegregate its public schools.
- 1973 State Board adopted mandatory regulations for statewide school district racial desegregation.
- 1973 Law established a Teachers Standards and Certification Commission (later renamed Board of Teaching). In 1980 made completely independent of the State Board of Education.
- 1973 Demonstration districts voucher bill passed the House but failed in Senate.
- 1973 Law established "pilot" Education Service Area in southwest central Minnesota to determine whether regional service units would be useful to small participating districts.
- 1974 Legislation passed authorizing secondary school cooperative centers.
- 1974 Law established "pilot" for early childhood and family education.
- 1976 Non-public School Aid Act passed providing funding for non-religious books and equipment to be loaned to non-public schools and for counselors, psychologists, speech teachers, remedial instructors, and other auxiliary service people to work in non-public schools.
- 1976 Legislation passed authorizing Educational Cooperative Service Units to provide small districts with some shared services and to encourage regional educational planning.
- 1976 Law established Planning, Evaluation and Reporter (PER) for all Minnesota school districts. (Significant amendments passed in 1984.)
- 1977 Law required comprehensive plan from each school district as well as area plans for 1980-83.

- 1979 Review of school finance formula established discretionary levy.
- 1982 Citizens League report on "Rebuilding Education to Make it Work."
- 1983 Special Education Cooperative authorized.
- 1983 Law passed establishing a five-tier school finance system allowing districts expanded discretion in the use of revenues available to them above a basic foundation amount.
- 1983 Law established "Article 8" education reform initiatives with emphasis on technology, instructional "effectiveness," and inservice education.
- 1983 Law passed allowing governor to directly appoint commissioner of education.
- 1983 Law established state governing board for post-secondary vocational schools, separate from State Board of Education.
- 1984 State Board issued new regulations for expanded secondary school course offerings.

APPENDIX B
AVERAGE STAFF SALARIES IN MINNESOTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1973-74, 1978-79, and 1982-83

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>1973-74</u>	<u>1978-79</u>	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, AND ASSISTANTS				
Superintendent	\$21,924	\$30,557	\$40,638	+ 85.4
Elementary Principal	18,160	25,837	35,432	95.1
Middle School Principal	18,128	26,592	36,574	101.8
Secondary Principal	<u>18,916</u>	<u>26,713</u>	<u>36,802</u>	<u>94.6</u>
TOTAL	\$19,275	\$27,387	\$37,167	+ 92.8
OTHER ADMINISTRATORS				
Special Education Admin.	\$20,272	\$24,014	\$34,500	+ 70.2
Secondary Vocational Admin.	16,507	23,582	32,013	93.9
Other Administrator	<u>16,757</u>	<u>22,727</u>	<u>32,294</u>	<u>92.7</u>
TOTAL	\$16,996	\$22,945	\$32,647	+ 92.1
SUPPORT STAFF				
Counselors	\$14,918	\$20,359	\$28,712	+ 92.5
Librarians/Media Gen.	11,442	16,790	24,384	113.2
Other Support Staff	<u>12,077</u>	<u>18,633</u>	<u>25,547</u>	<u>111.5</u>
TOTAL	\$12,725	\$18,541	\$25,818	+ 102.9
TEACHERS				
Prekindergarten	\$ 9,703	\$12,397	\$17,217	+ 77.4
Kindergarten	10,220	14,916	21,695	112.3
Elementary	10,235	15,173	22,401	118.9
Middle School	10,437	15,682	22,961	120.0
Secondary	11,231	16,381	24,092	114.5
Special Education	<u>9,808</u>	<u>13,853</u>	<u>20,688</u>	<u>110.9</u>
TOTAL	\$10,699	\$15,578	\$22,876	+ 113.8
TOTAL STAFF	\$11,366	\$16,448	\$23,912	+ 110.4

Note: The Minneapolis-St. Paul Consumer Price Index rose almost 120 percent during the period 1973-74 to 1982-83 (Berman, Weiler Associates, 1984d, A-24).

Reprinted from: Minnesota Department of Education, Education Statistics Section, Information on Minnesota Licensed Public School Staff, 1982-83, May 1984, p. 19.

APPENDIX C

VIEWS OF MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Highlights of several Minnesota Youth Polls conducted between 1980 and 1983 by the Center for Youth Development and Research at the University of Minnesota are presented here. These provide important information about how today's youth look at things, what they value, and their hopes and aspirations. The number of high school students (ages fourteen to eighteen) involved in each survey varied from 400 to 900 students from inner city, urban, suburban and rural schools throughout Minnesota. The Youth Polls used discussion groups who worked through standard questionnaires on the various topics of the polls.

How Important is Education?

- Seventy-five percent agreed with the statement "To get a good job, get a good education" (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 6).
- Seventy-three percent supported compulsory attendance laws and 34 percent suggested raising it to age seventeen or eighteen (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 11-12).

How Good Are the Schools?

- When asked to grade their schools the following results occurred, showing important geographic variations (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 9):

	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Suburban</u>	<u>Rural</u>	<u>All</u>
above average (A or B)	50%	37%	65%	44%
average (C)	28%	44%	26%	35%
below average (D or F)	22%	19%	9%	21%

What About What Happens During the School Day?

- Seventy-eight percent described the typical school day with negative words, particularly "boring" and "monotonous"; 15 percent used neutral language like "fills the day" and "better than sitting home and eating"; and 7 percent used positive words like "exhilarating," "interesting," and "fun" (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 13).
- The overwhelming majority said that the opportunity to be with their friends was the most enjoyable part of the school day (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 17).

- Minnesota high schoolers said the most important learnings gained in school are social skills (such as getting along with people, working in groups, fulfilling one's obligations to the school and community) and personal skills (such as becoming independent and responsible, learning to use free time wisely, gaining self-control, and decision-making). Sex, drug, and driver education courses were viewed as useful while students were teenagers, but were rarely mentioned as being important to them as adults. The least important things learned in school were information and skills not useful in the future or not applicable to current everyday problems (among those mentioned were grammar, literature, geometry, and algebra) (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 19-20).

How Involved Are Parents in School?

- The overwhelming majority said their parents have no involvement in their schools and about half said their parents had little or no participation in school activities (Hedin, Simon, and Robin 1983, 11).

What Do Students Do With Their Time?

- All respondents said they experience an overwhelming sense of pressure on a daily basis. They expressed concern about lack of free time for themselves as a result of several pressures--(in order) work and jobs, homework and being at school, and parents and family (Hedin and Simon 1980, 17).
- Some interesting responses emerged when students were asked "Ideally, if you could do anything you wanted with the time you are not in class, what would you do?" (Hedin and Simon 1980, 18)

<u>All Respondents</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Suburban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
1. party	1. party	1. party	1. work
2. work	2. sleep	2. TV	2. party
3. sleep	3. work	3. sleep	3. travel
4. watch TV	4. sports	4. work	4. TV
5. go shopping	5. see friends	5. shop	5. sleep
6. play sports	6. TV	6. movies	6. movies
7. see friends	7. shop	7. sports	7. shop
8. travel	8. read	8. travel	8. sports
9. go to movies	9. travel		
10. read			
11. sexual activity			

- One Youth Poll revealed an important development regarding youth participation in youth organizations, as opposed to non-organized activities:

"Our data indicate that one traditional avenue for meeting this need for belonging and connection--youth organizations and clubs--reaches relatively few youth. This conclusion is based on two kinds of evidence. First, many of our respondents had so little experience and interest in youth organizations, they were unable to sustain discussion on this topic. Second, their responses to questions about use of discretionary time indicate that few used their free time for out-of-school youth groups." (Hedin and Simon 1980, 29)

What About Political Participation?

- When asked if they would vote if they were eligible, almost 80 percent said yes. The breakdown by type of school was as follows (Conrad, Hedin, and Simon 1981, 8):

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
urban	69%	31%
suburban	79%	21%
rural	84%	16%

- But only 25 percent thought they would be active in politics (Conrad, Hedin, and Simon 1981, 8):

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>
urban	32%	58%	10%
suburban	33%	52%	21%
rural	14%	80%	6%

- When asked why eighteen to twenty-four year olds usually don't vote, the most frequent responses were they "don't care," "aren't interested," and "don't know much about it." The converse and less frequent responses had to do with politicians not being interested in the young (Conrad, Hedin, and Simon 1981, 6-7).
- When asked to list words that describe politics, most students listed negative words (such as "corruption," "scandal," "lying," "cheating," "bribery," and most of all, "boring"). The breakdown by types of schools were as follows (Conrad, Hedin, and Simon 1981, 12):

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>
urban	0	23%	77%
suburban	0	32%	68%
rural	0	48%	52%

What About Civic and Social Responsibility?

- According to the Youth Poll:

"Minnesota teenagers were rather equally divided in viewing their social and civic responsibilities in one of the following ways: 1) some students boldly state that they owe their country 'nothing,' 2) some perceive that being a good citizen merely means having appropriate attitudes about patriotism and loyalty, 3) another group of young people feel they have an obligation to actively contribute to a better society." (Hedin, Arneson, and Resnick 1980, 20)

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